'LONGINUS'

ON SUBLIMITY

TRANSLATED BY
D. A. RUSSELL

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Preface

I owe the stimulus to undertake this translation to Professor H. Lloyd-Jones. It has proved both enjoyable and instructive to write. I have naturally followed my recent Greek text (Oxford, 1964), except in a few places listed below (p. xvi). Occasionally, spontaneous vacillation or the persuasion of others has led me to a change of mind; more often, the demands of translation have forced a decision in places where an editor could declare suspended judgement.

I am greatly indebted to friends who have been kind enough to read and criticize my translation, and especially to Miss M. E. Hubbard, Dr. John Carey, Mr. R. J. C. Carden and Mr. M. W. Nield. I acknowledge with gratitude also the great help I have had from the staff of the Clarendon Press.

D.A.R.

Sept. 1965

Introduction

(i) *Analysis*

THE single medieval manuscript on which our knowledge of 'Longinus' depends suffered damage before any of the extant copies of it were made: some pages fell out. Consequently, about a third of the book is lost (the seven *lacunae* are indicated in the translation). Though this robs us of much that would be of interest, it does not, except in one important particular, affect our understanding of the author's fairly simple plan.

The key to the book is in chapter 8; what precedes this is an extended introduction.

We may summarize the book as follows:

1–2: a formal Preface.

3–5: faults incident to the attempt to achieve 'sublimity'. (This helps to define the subject by contrast.)

6–7: some marks of true 'sublimity'.

8: the five sources of 'sublimity':

- (i) The power of conceiving impressive thoughts (discussed in 9–15);
- (ii) strong emotion;
- (iii) certain kinds of figures of thought and speech (16–29);
- (iv) nobility of diction (30–38, 43);
- (v) 'Composition', i.e. word-order, rhythm, euphony (39–42).

(What has happened to (ii)? At the very end of the book (44.12), we are told that a separate work on emotions is to follow. It seems most natural to conclude that the long

lacuna in 9[1] contained a warning of this change of plan. Certain features both of the treatment of thought (9–15) and of later sections involve considerations of emotion, which is often mentioned and emphasized; it may be that the writer pointed this out also in the missing section.)

9–43: working out of the scheme (I have given more details in the headings of the translation; there is a good deal of unevenness in the scale of treatment).

44: 'Appendix' on the causes of the current decline of literature.

(ii) *Authorship*

The author of *On Sublimity* is unknown. The manuscript attributes it in one place to 'Dionysius Longinus', in another to 'Dionysius or Longinus'. Modern scholars generally believe that this second version of the title is correct, and represents two guesses made in Byzantine times: the author was either the Augustan critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus or Cassius Longinus, a well-known statesman and critic of the third century A.D. This second view was universally held in the eighteenth century; it is eloquently developed (Longinus was a colourful, even heroic, figure) in Boileau's *Préface* and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (chap. xi). But for good reasons of style and content neither guess can be right.

Of course, the other tradition in the manuscript might be based on knowledge; the author's name would then be Dionysius Longinus (a doubly lucky name for a critic), and we should know nothing more about him.

Anyway, it is generally believed that the book dates from the first century A.D. The main argument for this—and it is a convincing one—is derived from the last chapter (44), in which the author discusses the relation between the decline of literature and the political change from republican to monarchical government. This topic occurs frequently in writers of

[1] The chapter divisions are sixteenth-century, and are (as this example shows) perverse and unpractical. They will be found in the margin of the translation. My paragraphing and sub-titling are independent of them.

the first century or so of the Roman principate—e.g. in the two Senecas and in Tacitus. It does not occur much after A.D. 100, and is inconceivable in the disturbances of the third century.

The only other probable conclusion about the author which can be drawn from the book—nothing is known about the Roman addressee, Postumius Terentianus—is that he was either a Jew or in contact with Jewish culture. This follows from his use (9.9) of the opening sentences of Genesis as an example of sublimity. No other pagan writer uses the Bible like this. There are, moreover, several resemblances between the writer's language and thought and that of the Alexandrian Jew Philo (*c.* 30 B.C.–A.D. 45), but the attempts which are sometimes made to postulate a close connexion (e.g. to say that the 'philosopher' of the last chapter is Philo) press the evidence too far.

The most we can safely say is that the book was written in the first century A.D., by a writer with both Roman and Jewish contacts.

(iii) *Background*

This means that it was written in what was, for Greek literature, a comparatively uncreative period. No new genres—except perhaps biography (Plutarch) and the novel—were being developed. The language of literature was the language of the Attic classics, written four or five hundred years before. It was everywhere taught in schools, not only to people whose mother tongue was Greek but to the cosmopolitan urban populations of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. Nor were these multitudes taught merely to appreciate or interpret; education was essentially instruction in writing and speaking—in other words, 'rhetoric', a massive system of doctrine embracing the content, arrangement, and style of every kind of writing.[1] Thus the ancient literature was at this time the main instrument of civilization. Its lessons, however pedantically presented, were clear and unchanging; they were also ennobling. It did not seem to matter that the heroic values of

[1] See G. A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, London 1963.

Homer and the political standards of Demosthenes were very foreign to the life lived under Roman governors. The result of the situation was a new literature thoroughly derivative in language and directed at an audience whose culture mirrored their standard education. At the same time, it was not without originality of content, formal ingenuity, and (at times) real engagement in contemporary problems; for all his artificiality and pedantry, the Greek intellectual of the first and second centuries still had a good deal to say. The parallel with the Latin literature of the Renaissance is close enough to be useful: 'Longinus' would have understood what Petrarch and Mantuan were about. Moreover, there were of course close relations with Latin literature, which had more recently enjoyed its classical efflorescence and combined formal dependence on Greek *genres* with its native virtues and vices.

It is against this background that 'Longinus' should be read. The chapters on 'imitation' (13–14) will then be seen as central to his position; he is perhaps unique in using the metaphors of inspiration and possession to describe the process of reproducing the tone and spirit of ancient writers. Copying, he insists, is not enough; we must try to re-live the mental life of the classics.[1]

(iv) '*Sublimity*'

'Longinus' speaks pretty clearly for himself, despite his elaborate and often allusive style. There are few involved arguments, few new or difficult concepts. It needs little special knowledge to be in a position to dissect and criticize his central thesis. Nevertheless, one or two preliminary points may be useful.

(*a*) 'Sublimity' is clearly related to the older rhetorical concept of the 'high style'. This is natural; the author is a teacher of rhetoric, the book is primarily a manual of composition. It had long been traditional in Greek and Latin rhetoric to speak of three styles (*charactēres*): the grand or high style, the middle or smooth style, and the slight or plain style. These

[1] See, on the whole subject, J. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* (Paris 1958) 13–154.

were generalized versions of the various manners of the great authors. Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Lysias are the three type-figures in oratory as Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon are in history.[1] The 'recipe' for each style consists of precepts concerning diction, sentence-structure, figures and rhythms (cf. 'Longinus', 16–43). Certain subjects were more appropriate for one style than for another.

Much that is traditional in 'Longinus' comes from teaching of this kind. His originality[2] lies rather in his attempt to prescribe rules for something of a different category, namely the production of a certain kind of effect. Whatever *knocks the reader out* is 'sublime'. It may be a flood of elaborate diction, as often in Plato (13, 32), or a few simple words ('And God said *Let there be light*': 9.9). Moreover it occurs in all kinds of authors; among historians, for example, it is found in Herodotus and Xenophon as well as in Thucydides, so that it cuts right across the traditional description of *charactēres*. It is in fact much more a matter of content—in ancient terminology 'invention'—than of form. Hence the obvious concentration on 'cosmic' subjects—storms (10.3), divine epiphanies (9.5–9), the wonders of anatomy (32) or astronomy (35.4)—and on violent emotion (e.g. 10.1, 15, 27). But even this limitation is not a necessary one. Any subject which can genuinely excite is capable of being handled in a 'sublime' way. It often strikes scholars that one of the signs of 'Longinus'' greatness is that he is able to transcend the conventional limits of Greek criticism in such a way as to recognize 'grand' qualities in a wide range of genre and context; the most striking evidence is perhaps the Sappho poem (10.1).

(*b*) 'Sublimity' is also related to ethical ideals. Only a certain kind of person can achieve it. 'Longinus' (2) bids us not despair: it is not nececessary to be born like that; training of judgement, imitation, imaginative effort can do much. The

[1] Though Demetrius' *On Style* uses four main types, his procedure is particularly instructive: §§38–127 should be read with *On Sublimity*. See also G. A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, 278 ff.

[2] It is difficult to estimate how much he owes to his opponent Caecilius —probably more than he admits.

right kind of person, who must be a product both of endowment and of training, is evidently a variety of the philosophers' 'wise man'. He knows what is *really* valuable, and can distinguish it from the sham (7), he knows his place as a citizen of the *kosmos*, his greatness and his limitations (35–36), he rises superior to meanness and materialism (44).

This moral and philosophical approach is of course in keeping with the tendencies of the age, with its wide diffusion of Stoic and Platonic ethics and piety. But it can also be seen not as an independent element in 'Longinus'' thought, a gratuitous intrusion of the moralist into the critic's work, but as an attempt to come to terms with the literary problems of the times.

Greek and Roman rhetoric had always been in two minds, whether or not to claim to provide a moral as well as a technical education.[1] For some, rhetoric was simply a tool, capable of good or bad use; 'Longinus' is in the other camp—with Cicero and most Romans—and insists that the 'public man' for whom he writes (1.2) should also be a man of worth, sincerity, and gravity.

But whereas the relation of ethics to rhetoric is usually discussed in terms of the right and wrong use of the art, 'Longinus' seems rather to view moral standards not as an end subserved by rhetoric but as a foundation for literary success. The crucial judgement is that between 'sublimity' and counterfeit imitations (6–7), and this can only be made by minds of a certain moral and intellectual quality.

Thus 'Longinus'' 'moralism' and his use of the philosophical paradigm of the wise man may be seen as a solution to a literary problem inherent in the 'Renaissance' situation in which he wrote. Hellenistic and Roman literature had fought a long battle against staleness: its weapons were variation, innuendo, ingenuity of every kind. Reaction followed in the Augustan age: it was never wholly successful either in Greek or in Latin. It took two forms, both involving imitation of the earlier classics. One approach was that of the purists, of whom 'Longinus'' opponent Caecilius may be taken as typical. The

[1] See especially the arguments in Plato's *Gorgias*.

essence of it was restraint: 'Caecilius is one of those who lay down that not more than two or at most three metaphors may be used of the same subject' (32.1). Such rules led, in our author's view, to negative virtue and impeccable dullness, the skeleton of Attic simplicity without Attic verve. He therefore chose the other approach. Acknowledging the attraction of the novel thought, the pregnant remark, the bold metaphor, he undertook to set them on a firm foundation of good sense and enlightened and serious thinking. The enemies were pedantry, frigidity, frivolity. There was, he thought, no sense in struggling merely to avoid mistakes; no lasting literature could be created in this way. The whole personality must take charge. Nurtured in the really great classics, the mind would come to re-create their greatness almost instinctively. It would take the plunge on occasion, and be bold and ingenious in thought, language, or metaphor; but the boldness would be justified by the brilliance or tension of the emotional context it had created.[1]

Not many recent scholars or critics try seriously to illustrate 'Longinus' ' points, though this was sometimes done in the eighteenth century.[2] I shall not try here; but it may well be that the Latin poets of his own century would offer the clearest examples of what he means, and show how well he has diagnosed the problems of the time. Virgil, we might say, is better than Statius, and Statius than Silius, because of a better understanding of the difference between the false sublime and the true.

(v) *Influence*

It is a question for debate whether the immense popularity of 'Longinus' in the eighteenth century was due to similar circumstances in the history of taste to those in which the book was originally written.

The facts of the extraordinary revival are well known, and

[1] See e.g. 14, 16, 17, 32.

[2] E.g. in Leonard Welsted's version of Boileau's Longinus, 1712, pp. 144–98.

are well set out in the excellent books of Monk and Abrams.[1] Before Boileau's translation (1674), there is a trickle of allusions, but no recognition that 'Longinus' is anything out of the ordinary among rhetorical writers. Thus Chapman in his *Odyssey* (1615) finds fault with him for preferring the *Iliad*. After 1674 all is changed. Dryden is the first popularizer in England. Translations are eagerly read by the dilettante public of the *Spectator*. The stream swells to a flood, soon to be muddied by the philosophers. The aesthetic distinction between 'sublime' and 'beautiful' which played so large a part in the thought of the second half of the eighteenth century owed its beginnings to reflection on 'Longinus', but not much else. Barely a quarter of Monk's book is devoted to topics directly concerned with *On Sublimity*.

'Longinus' wrote in one 'Renaissance'; he was revived in another. He wrote to counteract the pedantry of 'classicists' who insisted on exactness of imitation, and to repudiate the divorce between literature and the moral life. His revival succeeded, primarily because he offered ancient and respectable authority for a degree of liberty and boldness. Whatever the differences between the two situations, the similarities are striking. So far as we know, he had no great effect in his own age; let us hope that, like his own ideal (14), he was content to write for posterity.

(vi) *A problem of translation*

'Longinus' does not use even his key terms with consistency. As with most ancient authors, the stylistic requirement of variety is often more powerful with him than the technical need for a rigid vocabulary.

The title announces the subject as *hupsos*, and this word and its cognates are common terms throughout the book. But they are not consistently distinguished from *megethos* and its relatives. *Hupsos* is 'height', *megethos* is 'size'. I have normally translated them respectively 'sublimity' and 'grandeur', but it

[1] See Bibliography.

it is not to be assumed that my choice always corresponds to 'Longinus''. They are in fact synonyms, only rarely to be differentiated—as, for example, in 12.1, where *megethos* is given a wider extension than *hupsos*.

My choice of 'sublimity' perhaps needs defence. I use it to avoid the substantivized adjective 'the sublime', which will make most English sentences look foreign. I hope also that the formal change to the noun may at the same time diminish some of the associations which 'the sublime' has had since the later eighteenth century: its opposition to 'the beautiful', its association with the awe-inspiring, and so on. These ideas must anyway be rejected, and 'Longinus'' concept allowed to expose itself. The alternatives 'greatness', 'height of speech', and 'elevation' suffer, I suspect, from worse difficulties; they may be used on occasion, but no one of them has a good claim to displace 'sublimity' as the normal equivalent of *hupsos* and its cognates.

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Note on the text

I have diverged from my Greek text in the following places:

7.3 : ἀπαξίωσιν for ἀπαύξησιν (my conjecture: cf. ἀπαξιόω 'disdain' 'reject', and the Stoic term ἀπαξία 'disvalue').
7.4 : τρόπων for λόγων (Morus).
8.4 : ἐπιπνέον for ἐκπνέον (Morus).
9.2 : ἑτέρωθί τι (my suggestion).
9.15: προσιστορείσθω (cf. Bühler[1], p. 74).
13.4 : ἐπανθίσαι for ἐπακμάσαι (Bühler, p. 99).
14.1 : μέγαλα for μέτρα (my suggestion, cf. Bühler p. 104).
15.7 : there may be a lacuna after τάφον (Bühler p. 111).
23.2 : θινῶν [ἐπ'] (M. L. West).
27.4 : ἀγαυοί; ⟨ἦ⟩, as in Homer.
31.1 : οὐκέτι· (my suggestion).
32.6 : obelize ἀραιοῦ.
32.8 : ἀκρίτως (my suggestion).
42 : ἀνακυκλούμενα (my suggestion).
43.2 : χύτραι βολβῶν (Toup).
44.9 : omit conjectural supplement.

[1] W. Bühler, Beiträge zur Erklärung der Schrift vom Erhabenen, Göttingen 1964.

ON SUBLIMITY

Preface

You will recall, my dear Postumius Terentianus, that when 1.1
we were reading together Caecilius' monograph *On Sublimity*,
we felt that it was inadequate to its high subject, and failed to
touch the essential points. Nor indeed did it appear to offer
the reader much practical help, and this ought to be a writer's
principal object. Two things are required of any text-book:
first, that it should explain what its subject is; second, and
more important, that it should explain how and by what
methods we can achieve it. Caecilius tries at immense length
to explain to us what sort of thing 'the sublime' is, as though
we did not know; but he has somehow passed over as un-
necessary the question how we can develop our nature to some
degree of greatness. However, we ought perhaps not so much 2
to blame our author for what he has left out as to commend him
for his originality and enthusiasm.

You have urged me to set down a few notes on sublimity for
your own use. Let us then consider whether there is anything
in my observations which may be thought useful to public men.
You must help me, my friend, by giving your honest opinion
in detail, as both your natural candour and your friendship
with me require. It was well said that what man has in
common with the gods is 'doing good and telling the
truth'.

Your own wide culture dispenses me from any long 3
preliminary definition. Sublimity is a kind of eminence
or excellence of discourse. It is the source of the distinction
of the very greatest poets and prose writers and the means by
which they have given eternal life to their own fame. For 4
grandeur produces ecstasy rather than persuasion in the

hearer; and the combination of wonder and astonishment always proves superior to the merely persuasive and pleasant. This is because persuasion is on the whole something we can control, whereas amazement and wonder exert invincible power and force and get the better of every hearer. Experience in invention and ability to order and arrange material cannot be detected in single passages; we begin to appreciate them only when we see the whole context. Sublimity, on the other hand, produced at the right moment, tears everything up like a whirlwind, and exhibits the orator's whole power at a single blow.

2.1 Your own experience will lead you to these and similar considerations. The question from which I must begin is whether there is in fact an art of sublimity or profundity.[1] Some people think it is a complete mistake to reduce things like this to technical rules. Greatness, the argument runs, is a natural product, and does not come by teaching. The only art is to be born like that. They believe moreover that natural products are very much weakened by being reduced to the bare bones of a textbook.

2 In my view, these arguments can be refuted by considering three points:

(i) Though nature is on the whole a law unto herself in matters of emotion and elevation, she is not a random force and does not work altogether without method.

(ii) She is herself in every instance a first and primary element of creation, but it is method that is competent to provide and contribute quantities and appropriate occasions for everything, as well as perfect correctness in training and application.

(iii) Grandeur is particularly dangerous when left on its own, unaccompanied by knowledge, unsteadied, unballasted, abandoned to mere impulse and ignorant temerity. It often needs the curb as well as the spur.

[1] This is to translate *bathous*. The simple, eighteenth-century emendation *pathous* means 'emotion'. Boileau omits the word. The English word 'bathos' seems to have acquired its meaning from a misunderstanding of this passage; see Pope's *Peri Bathous or on the Art of Sinking* (1728).

What Demosthenes[1] said of life in general is true also of literature: good fortune is the greatest of blessings, but good counsel comes next, and the lack of it destroys the other also. In literature, nature occupies the place of good fortune, and art that of good counsel. Most important of all, the very fact that some things in literature depend on nature alone can itself be learned only from art. 3

If the critic of students of this subject will bear these points in mind, he will, I believe, come to realize that the examination of the question before us is by no means useless or superfluous.

[Lacuna equivalent to about three printed pages]

Faults incident to the effort to achieve sublimity: turgidity, puerility, false emotion, frigidity

'. . . restrain the oven's mighty glow. 3.1
For if I see but one beside his hearth,
I'll thrust in just one tentacle of storm,
And fire his roof and turn it all to cinders.
I've not yet sung my proper song.'[2]

This is not tragedy; it is a parody of the tragic manner—tentacles, vomiting to heaven, making Boreas a flute-player, and so on. The result is not impressiveness but turbid diction and confused imagery. If you examine the details closely, they gradually sink from the terrifying to the contemptible.

Now if untimely turgidity is unpardonable in tragedy, a genre which is naturally magniloquent and tolerant of bombast, it will scarcely be appropriate in writing which has to do with real life. Hence the ridicule attaching to Gorgias of Leontini's 'Xerxes, the Persians' Zeus' and 'their living tombs, the vultures', or to various things in Callisthenes, where he has not so much risen to heights as been carried off 2

[1] *Orations* xxiii. 113.

[2] Aeschylus fr. 281 in Nauck's *Tragicorum graecorum fragmenta* (ed. 2). But it is not certain that the passage is not rather by Sophocles. The speaker is Boreas, the North Wind, who is enraged with King Erechtheus of Athens because he will not give him his daughter Orithyia. As the passage is incomplete, the point of some of the critical comment is lost.

his feet. Clitarchus is an even more striking example; he is an inflated writer, and, as Sophocles has it,

Blows at his tiny flute, the mouth-band off.[1]

Amphicrates, Hegesias, Matris—they are all the same. They often fancy themselves possessed when they are merely playing the fool.

3 Turgidity is a particularly hard fault to avoid, for it is one to which all who aim at greatness naturally incline, because they seek to escape the charge of weakness and aridity. They act on the principle that 'to slip from a great prize is
4 yet a noble fault'. In literature as in the body, puffy and false tumours are bad, and may well bring us to the opposite result from that which we expected. As the saying goes, there is nothing so dry as a man with dropsy.

While turgidity is an endeavour to go above the sublime, puerility[2] is the sheer opposite of greatness; it is a thoroughly low, mean and ignoble vice. What do I mean by 'puerility'? A pedantic thought, so over-worked that it ends in frigidity. Writers slip into it through aiming at originality, artifice and (above all) charm, and then coming to grief on the rocks of tawdriness and affectation.

5 A third kind of fault—what Theodorus called 'the pseudo-bacchanalian'—corresponds to these in the field of emotion. It consists of untimely or meaningless emotion where none is in place, or immoderate emotion where moderate is in place. Some people often get carried away, like drunkards, into emotions unconnected with the subject, which are simply their own pedantic invention. The audience feels nothing, so that they inevitably make an exhibition of themselves, parading their ecstasies before an audience which does not share them.

But I reserve the subject of emotion for another place,[3] returning meanwhile to the second fault of those I men-
4.1 tioned: frigidity. This is a constant feature in Timaeus,

[1] Fragment 701, Nauck, op. cit.

[2] The context shows what is meant: the shallow pedantry of the immature.

[3] Presumably in the lost passage.

who is in many ways a competent writer, not without the capacity for greatness on occasion, learned and original, but as unconscious of his own faults as he is censorious of others', and often falling into the grossest childishness through his passion for always starting exotic ideas. I will give one or 2
two examples; Caecilius has already cited most of those available.

(i) In praise of Alexander the Great, Timaeus writes: 'He conquered all Asia in fewer years than it took Isocrates to write the *Panegyricus* to advocate the Persian war.' What a splendid comparison this is—the Macedonian king and the sophist! On the same principle, the Lacedaemonians were very much less brave than Isocrates: it took them thirty years to capture Messene,[1] whereas he took only ten to write the *Panegyricus*!

(ii) Listen also to Timaeus' comment on the Athenians 3
captured in Sicily. 'They were punished for their impiety to Hermes and mutilation of his statues, and the main agent of their punishment was one who had a family connexion with their victim, Hermocrates the son of Hermon.'[2] I cannot help wondering, my dear Terentianus, why he does not also write about the tyrant Dionysius, 'Because he was impious towards Zeus and Heracles, Dion and Heraclides robbed him of his throne.'[3]

But why speak of Timaeus, when those heroes of letters, 4
Xenophon and Plato, for all that they were trained in Socrates' school, forget themselves sometimes for the sake of similar petty pleasures? Thus Xenophon writes in *The Constitution of the Lacedaemonians:* 'You could hear their voice less than the voice of stone statues, you could distract their

[1] In the eighth century B.C. Our other sources make this war last twenty years; we do not know the source of Longinus' variant (assuming the text to be correct).

[2] The disastrous Athenian expedition against Syracuse (415–413 B.C.) had been preceded by a mysterious incident at Athens, in which the 'Hermae' in the city were mutilated one night. N. G. L. Hammond, *History of Greece,* p. 390.

[3] Dionysius II, expelled in 356 (Hammond, op. cit., pp. 518–19). The name Dion is etymologically connected with Zeus (accusative *Dia,* genitive *Dios*).

eyes less than the eyes of bronze images; you would think them more bashful than the very maidens in the eyes.'[1] It would have been more in keeping with Amphicrates' manner than Xenophon's to speak of the pupils of our eyes as bashful maidens. And what an absurd misconception to think of everybody's pupils as bashful! The shamelessness of a person, we are told, appears nowhere so plainly as in the eyes. Remember the words Achilles uses to revile Agamemnon's violent
5 temper: 'Drunken sot, with a dog's *eyes*!'[2] Timaeus, unable to keep his hands off stolen property, as it were, has not left the monopoly of this frigid conceit to Xenophon. He uses it in connexion with Agathocles, who eloped with his cousin from the unveiling ceremony of her marriage to another: 'Who would have done this, if he had not had harlots in his eyes for pupils (*koras*)?'[3]

6 Now here is Plato, the otherwise divine Plato. He wants to express the idea of writing-tablets. 'They shall write', he says, 'and deposit in the temples memorials of cypress.'[4] Again: 'As for walls, Megillus, I should concur with Sparta in letting walls sleep in the earth and not get up.'[5] Herodotus'
7 description[6] of beautiful women as 'pains on the eyes' is the same sort of thing, though it is to some extent excused by the fact that the speakers are barbarians and drunk—not that it is a good thing to make an exhibition of the triviality of one's mind to posterity, even through the mouths of characters like these.

5 All such lapses from dignity arise in literature through a single cause: that desire for novelty of thought which is all the rage today. Evils often come from the same source as blessings; and so, since beauty of style, sublimity, and charm

[1] The word *korē* means both 'girl' and 'pupil'; Xenophon replaces it by *parthenos*, which means unambiguously 'maiden'.

[2] *Iliad* i. 225.—The text of this sentence in 'Longinus' is uncertain, but the general sense beyond doubt.

[3] Agathocles was ruler of Syracuse from 317 to 287. The 'unveiling ceremony' was normally held on the third day after the marriage.

[4] *Laws* 741C.

[5] *Laws* 778D.

[6] Herodotus v. 18.

all conduce to successful writing, they are also causes and principles not only of success but of failure. Variation, hyperbole and the use of plural for singular are like this too; I shall explain below the dangers which they involve.[1]

Some marks of true sublimity

At this stage, the question we must put to ourselves for discussion is how to avoid the faults which are so much tied up with sublimity. The answer, my friend, is: by first of all 6
achieving a genuine understanding and appreciation of true sublimity. This is difficult; literary judgement comes only as the final product of long experience. However, for the purposes of instruction, I think we can say that an understanding of all this can be acquired. I approach the problem in this way:

In ordinary life, nothing is truly great which it is great to 7.1
despise; wealth, honour, reputation, absolute power,—anything in short which has a lot of external trappings—can never seem supremely good to the wise man; because it is no small good to despise them. People who could have these advantages if they chose but disdain them out of magnanimity are admired much more than those who actually possess them.[2] It is much the same with elevation in poetry and literature generally. We have to ask ourselves whether any particular example does not give a show of grandeur which, for all its accidental trappings, will, when dissected, prove vain and hollow, the kind of thing which it does a man more honour to despise than to admire. It is our nature to be elevated and 2
exalted by true sublimity. Filled with joy and pride, we come to believe we have created what we have only heard. When a 3
man of sense and literary experience hears something many times over, and it fails to dispose his mind to greatness or to leave him with more to reflect upon than was contained in the mere words, but comes instead to seem valueless on repeated inspection, this is not true sublimity: it endures only for

[1] See chaps. 23 and 38.

[2] Compare Aristotle's 'magnanimous man': *Nicomachean Ethics* iv. 3.

the moment of hearing. Real sublimity contains much food for reflection, is difficult or rather impossible to resist, and makes a strong and ineffaceable impression on the memory.
4 In a word, reckon those things which please everybody all the time as genuinely and finely sublime. When people of different training, way of life, tastes, age and manners all agree about something, the judgement and assent, as it were, of so many distinct voices lends strength and irrefutability to the conviction that their admiration is rightly directed.

The five sources of sublimity; the plan of the book

8.1 There are, one may say, five most productive sources of sublimity. (Competence in speaking is assumed as a common foundation for all five; nothing is possible without it.)

(i) The first and most important is the power to conceive great thoughts; I defined this in my work on Xenophon.

(ii) The second is strong and inspired emotion. (These two sources are for the most part natural; the remaining three involve art.)

(iii) Certain kinds of figures. (These may be divided into figures of thought and figures of speech.)

(iv) Noble diction. This has as subdivisions choice of words and the use of metaphorical and artificial language.[1]

(v) Finally, to round off the whole list, dignified and elevated word-arrangement.[2]

Let us now examine the points which come under each of these heads.

I must first observe, however, that Caecilius has omitted
2 some of the five—emotion, for example. Now if he thought that sublimity and emotion were one and the same thing and always existed and developed together, he was wrong. Some emotions, such as pity, grief and fear, are found divorced from sublimity and with a low effect. Conversely, sublimity often

[1] Or 'and coined words'.

[2] *Sunthesis*; Latin 'compositio', but narrower in sense than 'composition' in non-technical English. See chaps. 39–42.

occurs apart from emotion. Of the innumerable examples of this I select Homer's bold account of the Aloadae:

> Ossa upon Olympus they sought to heap; and on Ossa
> Pelion with its shaking forest, to make a path to heaven—

and the even more impressive sequel—

> And they would have finished their work. . . .[1]

In orators, encomia and ceremonial or exhibition pieces always involve grandeur and sublimity, though they are generally devoid of emotion. Hence those orators who are best at conveying emotion are least good at encomia, and conversely the experts at encomia are not conveyers of emotion. On the other hand, if Caecilius thought that emotion had no contribution to make to sublimity and therefore thought it not worth mentioning, he was again completely wrong. I should myself have no hesitation in saying that there is nothing so productive of grandeur as noble emotion in the right place. It inspires and possesses our words with a kind of madness and divine spirit. 3 4

(i) *Greatness of thought*

The first source, natural greatness, is the most important. Even if it is a matter of endowment rather than acquisition, we must, so far as is possible, develop our minds in the direction of greatness and make them always pregnant with noble thoughts. You ask how this can be done. I wrote elsewhere something like this: 'sublimity is the echo of a noble mind'. This is why a mere idea, without verbal expression, is sometimes admired for its nobility—just as Ajax's silence in the Vision of the Dead is grand and indeed more sublime than any words could have been.[2] First then we must state what sublimity comes from: the orator must not have low or ignoble thoughts. Those whose thoughts and habits all their lives are trivial and servile cannot possibly produce anything 9.1 2 3

[1] *Odyssey* 11. 315–17.

[2] *Odyssey* 11. 563. Note that this is not an example, but a simile illustrating the point that ideas in themselves can be grand.

admirable or worthy of eternity. Words will be great if thoughts are weighty. This is why splendid remarks come
4 naturally to the proud; the man who, when Parmenio said, 'I should have been content'. . . .[1]

[Lacuna equivalent to about nine pages]

Successful and unsuccessful ways of representing supernatural beings and of exciting awe

5 . . . the interval between earth and heaven. One might say that this is the measure not so much of Strife as of Homer.[2]

Contrast the line about Darkness in Hesiod—if the *Shield* is by Hesiod:

Mucus dripped from her nostrils.[3]

This gives a repulsive picture, not one to excite awe. But how does Homer magnify the divine power?

As far as a man can peer through the mist,
Sitting on watch, looking over the wine-dark sea,
So long is the stride of the gods' thundering horses.[4]

He uses a cosmic distance to measure their speed. This enormously impressive image would make anybody say, and with reason that, if the horses of the gods took two strides like that, they would find there was not enough room in the world.

6 The imaginative pictures in the Battle of the Gods are also very remarkable:

And the great heavens and Olympus trumpeted
around them.

[1] Parmenio said to Alexander that if he were Alexander he would be content, and would not go on fighting. 'So would I, if I were Parmenio', replied Alexander.

[2] The reference is to *Iliad* 4. 440 ff., where Strife is described as having her head in the sky and walking on the earth. 'Longinus' means that Homer too is a colossus of cosmic dimensions.

[3] *Shield of Heracles* 267.

[4] *Iliad* 5. 770–2.

Aïdoneus, lord of the dead, was frightened in his depths;
And in fright he jumped from his throne, and shouted,
For fear the earth-shaker Poseidon might break through the ground,
And gods and men might see
The foul and terrible halls, which even the gods detest.[1]

Do you see how the earth is torn from its foundations, Tartarus laid bare, and the whole universe overthrown and broken up, so that all things—Heaven and Hell, things mortal and things immortal—war together and are at risk together in that ancient battle? But, terrifying as all this is, it 7
is blasphemous and indecent unless it is interpreted allegorically; in relating the gods' wounds, quarrels, revenges, tears, imprisonments, and manifold misfortunes, Homer, as it seems to me, has done his best to make the men of the Trojan war gods, and the gods men. If men are unhappy, there is always death as a harbour in trouble; what he has done for his gods is to make them immortal indeed, but immortally miserable.

Much better than the Battle of the Gods are the passages 8
which represent divinity as genuinely unsoiled and great and pure. The lines about Poseidon, much discussed by my predecessors, exemplify this:

The high hills and the forest trembled,
And the peaks and the city of Troy and the Achaean ships
Under the immortal feet of Poseidon as he went his way.
He drove over the waves, and the sea-monsters gambolled around him,
Coming up everywhere out of the deep; they recognized their king.
The sea parted in joy; and the horses flew onward.[2]

[1] See *Iliad* 21. 388 and 20. 61 ff.
[2] See *Iliad* 13. 18 ff. and 20. 60.

9 Similarly, the lawgiver of the Jews, no ordinary man—for he understood and expressed God's power in accordance with its worth—writes at the beginning of his *Laws*: 'God said'—now what?—' "Let there be light", and there was light; "Let there be earth", and there was earth.'[1]

10 Perhaps it will not be out of place, my friend, if I add a further Homeric example—from the human sphere this time—so that we can see how the poet is accustomed to enter into the greatness of his heroes. Darkness falls suddenly. Thickest night blinds the Greek army. Ajax is bewildered. 'O Father Zeus', he cries,

> 'Deliver the sons of the Achaeans out of the mist,
> Make the sky clear, and let us see;
> In the light—kill us.'

The feeling here is genuinely Ajax's. He does not pray for life—that would be a request unworthy of a hero—but having no good use for his courage in the paralysing darkness, and so angered at his inactivity in the battle, he asks for light, and quickly: he will at all costs find a shroud worthy of his valour, though Zeus be arrayed against him.

Comparison between the Iliad and the Odyssey

11 In this passage, it is the real Homer, the gale of whose genius fans the excitement of battle; the poet

> Rages like Ares, spear-brandishing, or the deadly fire
> Raging in the mountains, in the thickets of the deep wood.
> Foam shows at his mouth.[2]

In the *Odyssey*, on the other hand—and there are many reasons for adding this to our inquiry—he demonstrates that when a great mind begins to decline, a love of story-telling
12 characterizes its old age. We can tell that the *Odyssey* was his

[1] Controversy about the genuineness of this reference to Genesis i has raged since the eighteenth century. For the influence of the reference on literary taste, see especially Boileau *Réflexion* X and Huet's and Le Clerc's contributions to the discussion: S. H. Monk, *The Sublime*, 33.

[2] From *Iliad* 15. 605 ff.

second work from various considerations, in particular from his insertion of the residue of the Trojan troubles in the poem in the form of episodes, and the way in which he pays tribute of lamentation and pity to the heroes, treating them as persons long known. The *Odyssey* is simply an epilogue to the *Iliad*:

> There lies warlike Ajax, there Achilles,
> There Patroclus, the gods' peer as a counsellor,
> And there my own dear son.[1]

For the same reason, I maintain, he made the whole body of 13
the *Iliad*, which was written at the height of his powers, dramatic and exciting, whereas most of the *Odyssey* consists of narrative, which is a characteristic of old age. Homer in the *Odyssey* may be compared to the setting sun: the size remains without the force. He no longer sustains the tension as it was in the tale of Troy, nor the consistent level of elevation which never admitted any falling off. The outpouring of passions crowding one on another has gone; so has the versatility, the realism, the abundance of imagery taken from the life. We see greatness on the ebb. It is as though the Ocean were withdrawing into itself and flowing quietly in its own bed. Homer is lost in the realm of the fabulous and incredible. In saying 14
this, I have not forgotten the storms in the *Odyssey*, the story of Cyclops, and a few other episodes; I am speaking of old age—but it is the old age of a Homer. The point about all these stories is that the mythical element in them predominates over the realistic.

I digressed into this topic, as I said, to illustrate how easy it is for great genius to be perverted in decline into nonsense. I mean things like the story of the wineskin, the tale of the men kept as pigs in Circe's palace ('howling piglets', Zoilus called them), the feeding of Zeus by the doves (as though he were a chick in the nest), the ten days on the raft without food, and the improbabilities of the murder of the suitors.[2] What can we say of all this but that it really is 'the dreaming of a Zeus'?[3]

[1] Spoken by Nestor, *Odyssey* 3. 109 ff.

[2] For these various stories, see *Odyssey* 10. 17 ff., 10. 237 ff., 12. 447 ff., 22. 79 ff.

[3] Apparently a proverb: exact sense uncertain.

15 There is also a second reason for discussing the *Odyssey*. I want you to understand that the decline of emotional power in great writers and poets turns to a capacity for depicting manners. The realistic description of Odysseus' household forms a kind of comedy of manners.

Selection and organization of material

10.1 Now have we any other means of making our writing sublime? Every topic naturally includes certain elements which are inherent in its raw material. It follows that sublimity will be achieved if we consistently select the most important of these inherent features and learn to organize them as a unity by combining one with another. The first of these procedures attracts the reader by the selection of details, the second by the compression of those selected.

Consider Sappho's treatment of the feelings involved in the madness of being in love. She uses the attendant circumstances and draws on real life at every point. And in what does she show her quality? In her skill in selecting the outstanding details and making a unity of them:

2 'To me he seems a peer of the gods, the man who sits facing you and hears your sweet voice

And lovely laughter; it flutters my heart in my breast. When I see you only for a moment, I cannot speak;

My tongue is broken, a subtle fire runs under my skin; my eyes cannot see, my ears hum;

Cold sweat pours off me; shivering grips me all over; I am paler than grass; I seem near to dying;

But all must be endured. . . .'[1]

3 Do you not admire the way in which she brings everything

[1] See D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* chap. 2 for this poem (= Sappho, fragment 31). Eighteenth-century translation by Ambrose Phillips, *Spectator* 229, with criticism by Addison; Romantic translation by W. Headlam, *Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation*, no. 141; recent version by Richmond Lattimore, *Greek Lyrics*, 2nd edition (Chicago 1960), p. 39.

together—mind and body, hearing and tongue, eyes and skin? She seems to have lost them all, and to be looking for them as though they were external to her. She is cold and hot, mad and sane, frightened and near death, all by turns. The result is that we see in her not a single emotion, but a complex of emotions. Lovers experience all this; Sappho's excellence, as I have said, lies in her adoption and combination of the most striking details.

A similar point can be made about the descriptions of storms in Homer who always picks out the most terrifying aspects. The author of the *Arimaspea* on the other hand expects these 4
lines to excite terror:

> This too is a great wonder to us in our hearts:
> There are men living on water, far from land, on the deep sea:
> Miserable they are, for hard is their lot;
> They give their eyes to the stars, their lives to the sea;
> Often they raise their hands in prayer to the gods,
> As their bowels heave in pain.[1]

Anyone can see that this is more polished than awe-inspiring. Now compare it with Homer (I select one example out of 5
many):

> He fell upon them as upon a swift ship falls a wave,
> Huge, wind-reared by the clouds. The ship
> Is curtained in foam, a hideous blast of wind
> Roars in the sail. The sailors shudder in terror:
> They being carried away from under death, but only just.[2]

Aratus[3] tried to transfer the same thought: 6

> A little plank wards off Hades.

[1] From a lost poem attributed to Aristeas of Proconnesus, a phrophet of Apollo said to have travelled in Siberia in the seventh century B.C. The lines seem to express the surprised comment of innocent continentals, deep in Asia, on the tales they have heard about ships and seagoing. See J. D. P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus*, 8–15.

[2] *Ibid* 15.624 ff. [3] *Phaenomena* 299.

But this is smooth and unimpressive, not frightening. Moreover, by saying 'a plank wards off Hades', he has got rid of the danger. The plank *does* keep death away. Homer, on the other hand, does not banish the cause of fear at a stroke; he gives a vivid picture of men, one might almost say, facing death many times for every wave that comes. Notice also the forced combination of naturally uncompoundable prepositions: *hupek*, 'away from under'. Homer has tortured the words to correspond with the emotion of the moment, and expressed the emotion magnificently by thus crushing words together. He has in effect stamped the special character of the danger on the diction: 'they are being carried away from under death'.

7 Compare Archilochus on the shipwreck, and Demosthenes on the arrival of the news ('It was evening . . .')[1]

In short, one might say that these writters have taken only the very best pieces, polished them up and fitted them together. They have inserted nothing inflated, undignified or pedantic. Such things ruin the whole effect, because they produce, as it were, gaps or crevices, and so spoil the impressive thoughts which have been built into a structure whose cohesion depends upon their mutual relations.[2]

Amplification

11.1 The quality called 'amplification' is connected with those we have been considering. It is found when the facts or the issues at stake allow many starts and pauses in each section. You wheel up one impressive unit after another to give a

[1] The example from Archilochus cannot be certainly identified. That from Demosthenes (*On the Crown* 169) describes the alarm at Athens when news arrived of Philip's occupation of Elatea (339 B.C.) 'It was evening when somebody brought the *prytaneis* the news that Elatea was captured. Some of them got up in the middle of dinner and began to drive the traders from the stalls in the *agora* and burn the wicker hurdles. Others sent for the generals and gave instructions to the trumpeter. The town was full of uproar.'

[2] Text uncertain in detail; general sense clear.

series of increasing importance. There are innumerable varieties of amplification:[1] it may be produced by commonplaces, by exaggeration or intensification of facts or arguments, or by a build-up of action or emotion. The orator should realize, however, that none of these will have its full effect without sublimity. Passages expressing pity or disparagement are no doubt an exception; but in any other instance of amplification, if you take away the sublime element, you take the soul away from the body. Without the strengthening influence of the sublimity, the effective element in the whole loses all its vigour and solidity. 2

What is the difference between this precept and the point made above about the inclusion of vital details and their combination in a unity? What in general is the difference between amplification and sublimity? I must define my position briefly on these points, in order to make myself clear. 3

I do not feel satisfied with the definition given by the rhetoricians: 'amplification is expression which adds grandeur to its subject'. This might just as well be a definition of sublimity or emotion or tropes. All these add grandeur of some kind. The difference lies, in my opinion, in the fact that sublimity depends on elevation, whereas amplification involves extension; sublimity exists often in a single thought, amplification cannot exist without a certain quantity and superfluity. To give a general definition, amplification is an aggregation of all the details and topics which constitute a situation, strengthening the argument by dwelling on it; it differs from proof in that the latter demonstrates the point made. . . . **12.1** 2

[Lacuna equivalent to about three pages]

Same general subject continued: a comparison between Plato and Demosthenes, with a word on Cicero

. . . spreads out richly in many directions into an open sea of 3

[1] See Quintilian viii. 4.

grandeur. Accordingly, Demosthenes, the more emotional of the two, displays in abundance the fire and heat of passion, while Plato, consistently magnificent, solemn and grand, is much less intense—without of course being in the least
4 frigid. These seem to me, my dear Terentianus—if a Greek is allowed an opinion—to be also the differences between the grandeur of Cicero and the grandeur of Demosthenes. Demosthenes has an abrupt sublimity; Cicero spreads himself. Demosthenes burns and ravages; he has violence, rapidity strength and force, and shows them in everything; he can be compared to a thunderbolt or a flash of lightning. Cicero, on the other hand, is like a spreading conflagration. He ranges everywhere and rolls majestically on. His huge fires endure; they are renewed in various forms from time to
5 time and repeatedly fed with fresh fuel.—But this is a comparison which your countrymen can make better than I.

Anyway, the place for the intense, Demosthenic kind of sublimity is in indignant exaggeration, in violent emotion, and in general wherever the hearer has to be struck with amazement. The place for expansiveness is where he has to be deluged with words. This treatment is appropriate in *loci communes*, epilogues, digressions, all descriptive and exhibition pieces, historical or scientific topics, and many other departments.

13.1 To return to Plato, and the way in which he combines the 'soundless flow'[1] of his smooth style with grandeur. A passage you have read in the *Republic*[2] makes the point: 'Men without experience of wisdom and virtue and always occupied with feasting and that kind of thing naturally go downhill and wander through life on a low plane of existence. They never look upwards to the truth and never rise, they never taste certain or pure pleasure. Like cattle, they always look down, bowed earthwards and tablewards; they feed and they breed, and their greediness in these directions makes them kick and butt till they kill one another with iron horns and hooves, because they can never be satisfied.'

[1] Plato, *Theaetetus* 144B.

[2] *Republic* ix. 586A (adapted).

Imitation of earlier writers as a means to sublimity

Plato, if we will read him with attention, illustrates yet 2
another road to sublimity, besides those we have discussed. This is the way of imitation and emulation of great writers of the past. Here too, my friend, is an aim to which we must hold fast. Many are possessed by a spirit not their own. It is like what we are told of the Pythia at Delphi: she is in contact with the tripod near the cleft in the ground which (so they say) exhales a divine vapour, and she is thereupon made pregnant by the supernatural power and prophesies as one inspired. Similarly, the genius of the ancients acts as a kind of oracular cavern, and effluences flow from it into the minds of their imitators. Even those previously not much inclined to prophesy become inspired and share the enthusiasm which comes from the greatness of others. Was Herodotus the only 'most Homeric' writer? Surely Stesichorus and Archilochus 3
earned the name before him. So, more than any, did Plato, who diverted to himself countless rills from the Homeric spring. (If Ammonius had not selected and written up detailed examples of this, I might have had to prove the point myself.) In all this process there is no plagiarism. It resembles 4
rather the reproduction of good character in statues and works of art.[1] Plato could not have put such a brilliant finish on his philosophical doctrines or so often risen to poetical subjects and poetical language, if he had not tried, and tried wholeheartedly, to compete for the prize against Homer, like a young aspirant challenging an admired master. To break a lance in this way may well have been a brash and contentious thing to do, but the competition proved anything but valueless. As Hesiod says, 'this strife is good for men',[2] Truly it is a noble contest and prize of honour, and one well worth winning, in which to be defeated by one's elders is itself no disgrace.

We can apply this to ourselves. When we are working on **14.1**

[1] Text uncertain: perhaps 'the reproduction of beauty of form . . .'.

[2] *Works and Days* 24: healthy rivalry contrasted with the strife that produces war.

something which needs loftiness of expression and greatness of thought, it is good to imagine how Homer would have said the same thing, or how Plato or Demosthenes or (in history) Thucydides would have invested it with sublimity. These great figures, presented to us as objects of emulation and, as it were, shining before our gaze, will somehow elevate our minds
2 to the greatness of which we form a mental image. They will be even more effective if we ask ourselves 'How would Homer or Demosthenes have reacted to what I am saying, if he had been here? What would his feelings have been?' It makes it a great occasion, if you imagine such a jury or audience for your own speech, and pretend that you are answering for what you
3 write before judges and witnesses of such heroic stature. Even more stimulating is the further thought: 'How will posterity take what I am writing?' If a man is afraid of saying anything which will outlast his own life and age, the conceptions of his mind are bound to be incomplete and abortive; they will miscarry and never be brought to birth whole and perfect for the day of posthumous fame.

Visualization (phantasia)

15.1 Another thing which is very productive of grandeur, magnificence and urgency, my young friend, is visualization (*phantasia*). I use this word for what some people call image-production. The term *phantasia* is used generally for anything which in any way suggests a thought productive of speech;[1] but the word has also come into fashion for the situation in which enthusiasm and emotion make the speaker *see* what he is saying and bring it *visually* before his audience.
2 It will not escape you that rhetorical visualization has a different intention from that of the poets: in poetry the aim is astonishment, in oratory it is clarity. Both, however, seek emotion and excitement.

Mother, I beg you, do not drive them at me,

[1] A Stoic definition.

The women with the blood in their eyes and the snakes–
They are here, they are here, jumping right up to me.[1]

Or again:

O, o! She'll kill me. Where shall I escape?[2]

The poet himself saw the Erinyes, and has as good as made his audience see what he imagined.

Now Euripides devotes most pains to producing a tragic effect with two emotions, madness and love. In these he is supremely successful. At the same time, he does not lack the courage to attempt other types of visualization. Though not formed by nature for grandeur, he often forces himself to be tragic. When the moment for greatness comes, he (in Homer's words) 3

Whips flank and buttocks with his tail
And drives himself to fight.[3]

For example, here is Helios handing the reins to Phaethon:[4] 4

'Drive on, but do not enter Libyan air—
It has no moisture in it, and will let
Your wheel fall through—'

and again:

'Steer towards the seven Pleiads.'
The boy listened so far, then seized the reins,
Whipped up the winged team, and let them go.
To heaven's expanse they flew.
His father rode behind on Sirius,
Giving the boy advice: 'That's your way, there:
Turn here, turn there.'

[1] Euripides, *Orestes* 255–7. Orestes sees the Furies.

[2] Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 291. Again Orestes and the Furies.

[3] *Iliad* 20. 170.

[4] Fragment 779, Nauck, op. cit. Euripides' lost *Phaethon* told the story of Phaethon's marriage and how his mother Clymene revealed to him that Helios was his father; he then begs to be allowed to drive the sun's chariot, and disaster follows. The passages quoted seem to be from a messenger's speech recounting Phaethon's fall.

May one not say that the writer's soul has mounted the chariot, has taken wing with the horses and shares the danger? Had it not been up among those heavenly bodies and moved in their courses, he could never have visualized such things.

Compare, too, his Cassandra:

> Ye Trojans, lovers of horses . . .[1]

5 Aeschylus, of course, ventures on the most heroic visualizations; he is like his own Seven against Thebes—

> Seven men of war, commanders of companies,
> Killing a bull into a black-bound shield,
> Dipping their hands in the bull's blood,
> Took oath by Ares, by Enyo, by bloodthirsty Terror—

in a joint pledge of death in which they showed themselves no mercy. At the same time, he does sometimes leave his thoughts unworked, tangled and hard. The ambitious Euri-
6 pides does not shirk even these risks. For example, there is in Aeschylus a remarkable description of the palace of Lycurgus in its divine seizure at the moment of Dionysus' epiphany:

> The palace was possessed, the house went bacchanal.

Euripides expresses the same thought less harshly:

> The whole mountain went bacchanal with them.[2]

7 There is another magnificent visualization in Sophocles' account of Oedipus dying and giving himself burial to the accompaniment of a sign from heaven,[3] and in the appearance of Achilles to the departing fleet over his tomb.[4] Simonides

[1] Fragment 935, Nauck, op. cit. Perhaps from the *Alexandros*. As the context is lost, we do not know the point. Compare p. 16, n. 1 for a similar abridged quotation, where 'Longinus' assumes his readers to know the context.

[2] Aeschylus fr. 58 Nauck, op. cit.; Euripides, *Bacchae* 726. Euripides makes the idea easier by adding the notion that the mountain *shared* the ecstasy of the bacchanals themselves.

[3] Closing scene of *Oedipus Coloneus*.

[4] Probably in the lost *Polyxena*.—It is possible that something is lost between this sentence and the reference to Simonides.

has perhaps described this scene more vividly than anyone else; but it is impossible to quote everything.

The poetical examples, as I said, have a quality of exaggeration which belongs to fable and goes far beyond credibility. In an orator's visualizations, on the other hand, it is the element of fact and truth which makes for success; when the content of the passage is poetical and fabulous and does not shrink from any impossibility, the result is a shocking and outrageous abnormality. This is what happens with the shock orators of our own day; like tragic actors, these fine fellows *see* the Erinyes, and are incapable of understanding that when Orestes says 8

> Let me go; you are one of my Erinyes,
> You are hugging me tight, to throw me into Hell,[1]

he visualizes all this because he is mad.

What then is the effect of rhetorical visualization? There is much it can do to bring urgency and passion into our words; but it is when it is closely involved with factual arguments that it enslaves the hearer as well as persuading him. 'Suppose you heard a shout this very moment outside the court, and someone said that the prison had been broken open and the prisoners had escaped—no one, young or old, would be so casual as not to give what help he could. And if someone then came forward and said "This is the man who let them out", our friend would never get a hearing; it would be the end of him.'[2] There is a similar instance in Hyperides' defence of himself when he was on trial for the proposal to liberate the slaves which he put forward after the defeat.[3] 'It was not the proposer', he said, 'who drew up this decree: it was the battle of Chaeronea.' Here the orator uses a visualization actually in the moment of making his factual argument, with the result that his thought has taken him beyond the limits of mere 9 10

[1] Euripides, *Orestes* 264–5.

[2] Demosthenes, *Oration* xxiv. 208.

[3] I.e. after Philip's victory at Chaeronea (338 B.C.). The speech is not extant.

11 persuasiveness. Now our natural instinct is, in all such cases, to attend to the stronger influence, so that we are diverted from the demonstration to the astonishment caused by the visualization, which by its very brilliance conceals the factual aspect. This is a natural reaction: when two things are joined together, the stronger attracts to itself the force of the weaker.

12 This will suffice for an account of sublimity of thought produced by greatness of mind, imitation, or visualization.[1]

(iii) *Figures*[2]

An example to illustrate the right use of figures: the 'oath' in 'On the Crown'

16.1 The next topic is that of figures. Properly handled, figures constitute, as I said, no small part of sublimity. It would be a vast, or rather infinite, labour to enumerate them all; what I shall do is to expound a few of those which generate sublimity, simply in order to confirm my point.

2 Here is Demosthenes putting forward a demonstrative argument on behalf of his policy.[3] What would have been the natural way to put it? 'You have not done wrong, you who fought for the liberty of Greece; you have examples to prove this close at home: the men of Marathon, of Salamis, of Plataea did not do wrong.' But instead of this he was suddenly inspired to give voice to the oath by the heroes of Greece: 'By those who risked their lives at Marathon, you have not done wrong!' Observe what he effects by this single figure of conjuration, or 'apostrophe' as I call it here. He deifies his audience's ancestors, suggesting that it is right to take an oath by men who fell so bravely, as though they were gods. He inspires the judges with the temper of those who risked their lives. He transforms his demonstration into an extraordinary piece of sublimity and passion, and into the convincingness of

[1] Note that this is not a complete summary of chaps. 9–15.

[2] The second 'source', emotion, does not appear in its expected place. See Introduction, p. ix.

[3] The passage discussed is in *Oration* xviii. 208.

this unusual and amazing oath. At the same time he injects into his hearers' minds a healing specific, so as to lighten their hearts by these paeans of praise and make them as proud of the battle with Philip as of the triumphs of Marathon and Salamis. In short, the figure enables him to run away with his audience.

Now the origin of this oath is said to be in the lines of 3
Eupolis:

> By Marathon, by *my* battle,
> No one shall grieve me and escape rejoicing.[1]

The greatness therefore depends not on the mere form of the oath, but on place, manner, occasion and purpose. In Eupolis, there is nothing but the oath; he is speaking to the Athenians while their fortunes are still high and they need no comfort; and instead of immortalizing the men in order to engender in the audience a proper estimation of their valour, he wanders away from the actual people who risked their lives to an inanimate object, namely the battle. In Demosthenes, on the other hand, the oath is addressed to a defeated nation, to make them no longer think of Chaeronea as a disaster. It embraces, as I said, a demonstration that they 'did no wrong', an illustrative example, a confirmation, an encomium, and an exhortation. Moreover, because he was faced with the possi- 4
ble objection 'your policies brought us to defeat—and yet you swear by victories!' he brings his thought back under control and makes it safe and unanswerable, showing that sobriety is needed even under the influence of inspiration: 'By those who *risked their lives* at Marathon, and *fought in the ships* at Salamis and Artemisium, and *formed the line* at Plataea!' He never says *conquered*; throughout he withholds the word for the final issue, because it was a happy issue, and the opposite to that of Chaeronea. From the same motives he forestalls his audience by adding immediately: 'all of whom were buried at the city's expense, Aeschines—all, not only the successful'.

[1] From the lost comedy *Demoi*. Eupolis parodies Euripides, *Medea* 395 ff.

The relation between figures and sublimity

17.1 At this point, my friend, I feel I ought not to pass over an observation of my own. It shall be very brief: figures are natural allies of sublimity and themselves profit wonderfully from the alliance. I will explain how this happens.

Playing tricks by means of figures is a peculiarly suspect procedure. It raises the suspicion of a trap, a deep design, a fallacy. It is to be avoided in addressing a judge who has power to decide, and especially in addressing tyrants, kings, governors or anybody in a high place. Such a person immediately becomes angry if he is led astray like a foolish child by some skilful orator's figures. He takes the fallacy as indicating contempt for himself. He becomes like a wild animal. Even if he controls his temper, he is now completely conditioned against being convinced by what is said. A figure is therefore generally thought to be best when the fact that it is a figure is concealed.

2 Thus sublimity and emotion are a defence and a wonderful aid against the suspicion which the use of figures engenders. The artifice of the trick is lost to sight in the surrounding brilliance of beauty and grandeur, and it escapes all suspicion. 'By the men of Marathon . . .' is proof enough. For how did Demosthenes conceal the figure in that passage? By sheer brilliance of course. As fainter lights disappear when the sunshine surrounds them, so the sophisms of rhetoric are dimmed when they are enveloped in encircling grandeur. Something like this happens in painting: when light and shadow are juxtaposed in colours on the same plane, the light seems more prominent to the eye, and both stands out and actually appears much nearer. Similarly, in literature, emotional and sublime features seem closer to the mind's eye, both because of a certain natural kinship[1] and because of their brilliance. Consequently, they always show up above the figures, and overshadow and eclipse their artifice.

Rhetorical questions

18.1 What are we to say of inquiries and questions? Should we

[1] See below, chap. 35.

not say that they increase the realism and vigour of the writing by the actual form of the figure?[1]

'Or—tell me—do you want to go round asking one another "Is there any news?"? What could be hotter news than that a Macedonian is conquering Greece? "Is Philip dead?" "No, but he's ill." What difference does it make to you? If anything happens to him, you will soon create another Philip.'[2]

Again: 'Let us sail to Macedonia. "Where shall we anchor?" says someone. The war itself will find out Philip's weak spots.'[3] Put in the straightforward form, this would have been quite insignificant; as it is, the impassioned rapidity of question and answer and the device of making an objection to oneself have made the remark, in virtue of its figurative form, not only more sublime but more credible. For emotion 2
carries us away more easily when it seems to be generated by the occasion rather than deliberately assumed by the speaker, and the self-directed question and its answer represent precisely this momentary quality of emotion. Just as people who are unexpectedly plied with questions become annoyed and reply to the point with vigour and exact truth, so the figure of question and answer arrests the hearer and cheats him into believing that all the points made were raised and are being put into words on the spur of the moment.

Again—this sentence in Herodotus is believed to be a particularly fine example of sublimity—[4] . . .

[Lacuna equivalent to about three pages]

Asyndeton

. . . the words tumble out without connexion, in a kind of **19.1**
stream, almost getting ahead of the speaker: 'Engaging their shields, they pushed, fought, slew, died' (Xenophon.)[5]

[1] Notice that these remarks are themselves cast as rhetorical questions.
[2] Demosthenes, *Orations* iv. 10.
[3] Ibid., 44.
[4] *Perhaps* Herodotus vii. 21.
[5] *Hellenica* IV. iii. 19.

2 'We went as you told us, noble Odysseus, up the woods,
We saw a beautiful palace built in the glades',

says Homer's Eurylochus.[1]

Disconnected and yet hurried phrases convey the impression of an agitation which both obstructs the reader and drives him on. Such is the effect of Homer's asyndeta.

Asyndeton combined with anaphora

20.1 The conjunction of several figures in one phrase also has a very stirring effect. Two or three may be joined together in a kind of team, jointly contributing strength, persuasiveness, charm. An example is the passage in *Against Midias*,[2] where asyndeton is combined with anaphora and vivid description. 'The aggressor would do many things—some of which his victim would not even be able to tell anyone else—with 2 gesture, with look, with voice.' Then, to save the sentence from monotony and a stationary effect—for this goes with inertia, whereas disorder goes with emotion, which is a disturbance and movement of the mind—he leaps immediately to fresh instances of asyndeton and epanaphora: 'With gesture with look, with voice, when he insults, when he acts as an enemy, when he slaps the fellow, when he slaps him on the ears. . . .' The orator is doing here exactly what the bully 3 does—hitting the jury in the mind with blow after blow. Then he comes down with a fresh onslaught, like a sudden squall: '. . . when he slaps the fellow, when he slaps him on the ears. That rouses people, that makes them lose control, when they are not used to being insulted. No one could bring out the horror of such a moment by a mere report.' Here Demosthenes keeps up the natural effect of epanaphora and asyndeton by frequent variation. His order becomes disorderly, and his disorder in turn acquires a certain order.

Polysyndeton

21.1 Now add the conjunctions, as Isocrates' pupils do. 'Again,

[1] *Odyssey* 10. 251–2. [2] Demosthenes, *Orations* xxi. 72.

one must not omit this point, that the aggressor would do many things, first with gesture, then with look, and finally with voice.' As you proceed with these insertions, it will become clear that the urgent and harsh character of the emotion loses its sting and becomes a spent fire as soon as you level it down to smoothness by the conjunctions. If you tie a 2
runner's arms to his side, you take away his speed; likewise, emotion frets at being impeded by conjunctions and other additions, because it loses the free abandon of its movement, and the sense of being, as it were, catapulted out.

Hyperbaton

Hyperbaton belongs to the same general class. It is an 22.1
arrangement of words or thoughts which differs from the normal sequence. . . .[1] It is a very real mark of urgent emotion. People who in real life feel anger, fear, or indignation, or are distracted by jealousy or some other emotion (it is impossible to say how many emotions there are; they are without number), often put one thing forward and then rush off to another, irrationally inserting some remark, and then hark back again to their first point. They seem to be blown this way and that by their excitement, as if by a veering wind. They inflict innumerable variations on the expression, the thought, and the natural sequence. Thus hyperbaton is a means by which, in the best authors, imitation approaches the effect of nature. Art is perfect when it looks like nature, nature is felicitous when it embraces concealed art. Consider the words of Dionysius of Phocaea in Herodotus:[2] 'Now, for our affairs are on the razor's edge, men of Ionia, whether we are to be free or slaves—and worse than slaves, runaways—so if you will bear hardships now, you will suffer temporarily but be able to overcome your enemies.' The natural order of thought would have been: 'Men of Ionia, now is the time for 2
you to bear hardships, for our affairs are on the razor's edge.'

[1] Probably a few words are missing here.
[2] vi. 11.

The speaker has displaced 'men of Ionia'; he begins with the cause of fear, as though the alarm was so pressing that he did not even have time to address the audience by name. He has also diverted the order of thought. Before saying that they must suffer hardship themselves (that is the gist of his exhortation), he first gives the reason why it is necessary, by saying 'our affairs are on the razor's edge'. The result is that he seems to be giving not a premeditated speech but one forced on him by the circumstances.

3 It is even more characteristic of Thucydides to show ingenuity in separating by transpositions even things which are by nature completely unified and indivisible.

Demosthenes is less wilful in this than Thucydides, but no one uses this kind of effect more lavishly. His transpositions produce not only a great sense of urgency but the appearance of extemporization, as he drags his hearers with him into the 4 hazards of his long hyperbata. He often holds in suspense the meaning which he set out to convey and, introducing one extraneous item after another in an alien and unusual place before getting to the main point, throws the hearer into a panic lest the sentence collapse altogether, and forces him in his excitement to share the speaker's peril, before, at long last and beyond all expectation, appositely paying off at the end the long due conclusion; the very audacity and hazardousness of the hyperbata add to the astounding effect. There are so many examples that I forbear to give any.

Changes of case, tense, person, number, gender; plural for singular and singular for plural

23.1 What is called polyptoton, like accumulation, variation, and climax, is, as you know, extremely effective and contributes both to ornament and to sublimity and emotion of every kind.[1]

[1] 'Polyptoton' is the occurrence of the same word in various inflexions. It is not certain whether 'Longinus' thinks of accumulation (*athroismos*), variation (*metabole*), and climax as species of it or as distinct.—For what the ancient rhetoricians called 'climax', compare Romans v. 3, viii. 29–30.

How do variations in case, tense, person, number, and gender diversify and stimulate the syle? My answer to this is 2
that, as regards variations of number, the lesser effect (though a real one) is produced by instances in which singular forms are seen on reflection to be plural in sense:

> The innumerable host
> Were scattered over the sandy beach, and shouted.

More worthy of note are the examples in which plurals give a more grandiose effect, and court success by the sense of multitude expressed by the grammatical number. An example 3
comes in Sophocles, where Oedipus says:

> Weddings, weddings,
> You bred me and again released my seed,
> Made fathers, brothers, children, blood of the kin,
> Brides, wives, mothers—all
> The deeds most horrid ever seen in men.[1]

All this is about Oedipus on the one hand and Jocasta on the other, but the expansion of the number to the plural forms pluralizes the misfortunes also.

Another example is:

> Hectors and Sarpedons came forth.[2]

Another is the Platonic passage about the Athenians, 4
which I have quoted elsewhere:[3] 'No Pelopses or Cadmuses or Aegyptuses or Danauses or other barbarians by birth have settled among us; we are pure Greeks, with no barbarian blood', and so on. Such an agglomeration of names in crowds naturally makes the facts sound more impressive. But the practice is only to be followed when the subject admits amplification, abundance, hyperbole, or emotion—one or more of these. Only a sophist has bells on his harness wherever he goes.

The contrary device—the contraction of plurals into **24.1**

[1] *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1403 ff.
[2] A line of an unknown tragedy.
[3] *Menexenus* 245D. Not quoted in any other extant part of this book.

singulars—also sometimes produces a sublime effect. 'The whole Peloponnese was divided.'[1] 'When Phrynichus produced *The Capture of Miletus* the theatre burst into tears' ('theatre' for 'spectators.').[2] To compress the separate individuals into the corresponding unity produces a more solid effect.

2 The cause of the effect is the same in both cases. Where the nouns are singular, it is a mark of unexpected emotion to pluralize them.[3] Where they are plural, to unite the plurality under one well-sounding word is again surprising because of the opposite transformation of the facts.

Vivid present tense

25 To represent past events as present is to turn a narrative into a thing of immediate urgency. 'A man who has fallen under Cyrus's horse and is being trampled strikes the horse in the belly with his sword. The horse, convulsed, shakes Cyrus off. He falls.' (Xenophon[4]). This is common in Thucydides.

Imaginary second person

26.1 Urgency may also be conveyed by the replacement of one grammatical person by another. It often gives the hearer the sense of being in the midst of the danger himself.

> 'You would say they were tireless, never wearied in war,
> So eagerly they fought' (Homer[5]).

> 'May you never be drenched in the sea in that month!'
> (Aratus[6]).

2 'You will sail upstream from Elephantine, and then you will come to a smooth plain. After crossing this, you will

[1] Demosthenes, *Orations* xviii. 18.
[2] Herodotus vi. 21.
[3] *Or* 'it is a mark of emotion to pluralize them unexpectedly'.
[4] *Cyropaedia* VII. i. 37.
[5] *Iliad* 15. 697.
[6] *Phaenomena* 287.

embark on another boat and sail for two days. Then you will come to a great city called Meroe' (Herodotus[1]).

Do you see, my friend, how he grips your mind and takes it on tour through all these places, making hearing as good as seeing? All such forms of expression, being directed to an actual person, bring the hearer into the presence of real events.

Moreover, if you speak as though to an individual and not to a large company, you will affect him more and make him more attentive and excited, because the personal address stimulates: 3

You could not tell with whom Tydides stood.[2]

Lapses into direct speech

Sometimes a writer, in the course of a narrative in the third person, makes a sudden change and speaks in the person of his character. This kind of thing is an outburst of emotion. 27.1

Hector shouted aloud to the Trojans
To rush for the ships, and leave the spoils of the dead.
'If I see anyone away from the ships of his own accord,
I will have him killed on the spot.'[3]

Here the poet has given the narrative to himself, as appropriate to him, and then suddenly and without warning has put the abrupt threat in the mouth of the angry prince. It would have been flat if he had added 'Hector said'. As it is, the change of construction is so sudden that it has outstripped its creator.

Hence the use of this figure is appropriate when the urgency of the moment gives the writer no chance to delay, but forces on him an immediate change from one person to another. 'Ceyx was distressed at this, and ordered the children to depart. "For I am unable to help you. Go therefore to some other country, so as to save yourselves without harming me" ' (Hecataeus).[4] 2

Somewhat different is the method by which Demosthenes 3

[1] ii. 29.

[2] *Iliad* 5. 85. This example seems to make no new point; both it and the preceding exx. have singular second persons.

[3] *Iliad* 15. 346. [4] Fragment 30 Jacoby.

in *Against Aristogiton*[1] makes variation of person produce the effect of strong emotion and rapid change of tone: 'Will none of you be found to feel bile or anger at the violence of this shameless monster, who—you vile wretch, your right of free speech is barred not by gates and doors which can be opened, but . . . .!' He makes the change before the sense is complete, and in effect divides a single thought between two persons in his passion ('who—you vile wretch. . . .!'), as well as turning to Aristogiton and giving the impression of abandoning the course of his argument—with the sole result, so strong is the emotion, of giving it added intensity.

4 So also Penelope:

> Herald, why have the proud suitors sent you here?
> Is it to tell Odysseus' maidservants
> To stop their work and get dinner for them?
> After their wooing, may they never meet again!
> May this be their last dinner here—
> You who gather together so often and waste wealth,
> Who never listened to your fathers when you were children
> And they told you what kind of man Odysseus was![2]

Periphrasis

28.1 No one, I fancy, would question the fact that periphrasis is a means to sublimity. As in music the melody is made sweeter by what is called the accompaniment, so periphrasis is often heard in concert with the plain words and enhances them with a new resonance. This is especially true if it contains nothing bombastic or tasteless but only what is
2 pleasantly blended. There is a sufficient example in Plato, at the beginning of the Funeral Speech:[3] 'These men have received their due, and having received it they go on their fated journey, escorted publicly by their country and privately each by his own kindred.' Plato here calls death a 'fated journey' and the bestowal of regular funeral rites a public

[1] *Oration* xxv (a spurious speech). The passage is from §27.
[2] *Odyssey* 4. 681 ff. [3] *Menexenus* 236D.

escort by the country. This surely adds no inconsiderable impressiveness to the thought. He has lyricized the bare prose, enveloping it in the harmony of the beautiful periphrasis.

'You believe labour to be the guide to a pleasant life; you 3
have gathered into your souls the noblest and most heroic of possessions: you enjoy being praised more than anything else in the world' (Xenophon[1]). In this passage 'you make labour the guide to a pleasant life' is put for 'you are willing to labour'. This and the other expansions invest the praise with a certain grandeur of conception.

Another example is the inimitable sentence of Herodotus: 4
'The goddess struck the Scythians who plundered the temple with a feminine disease.'[2]

Periphrasis, however, is a particularly dangerous device if 29.1
it is not used with moderation. It soon comes to be heavy and dull, smelling of empty phrases and coarseness of fibre. This is why Plato—who is fond of the figure and sometimes uses it unseasonably—is ridiculed for the sentence in the *Laws*[3] which runs: 'Neither silvern wealth nor golden should be permitted to establish itself in the city.' If he had wanted to prohibit cattle, says the critic, he would have talked of 'ovine and bovine' wealth.

Conclusion of the section on figures

So much, my dear Terentianus, by way of digression on the 2
theory of the use of those figures which conduce to sublimity. They all make style more emotional and excited, and emotion is as essential a part of sublimity as characterization is of charm.[4]

[Lacuna of about three pages]

[1] *Cyropaedia* I. v. 12. [2] Herodotus i. 105. [3] 801B.

[4] 'Pathos' (emotion) characterizes truly 'sublime' writing; 'ēthos' (realistic depiction of manners or humours) belongs rather to lower, more human and even comic, *genres*: cf. the Iliad-Odyssey contrast, 9. 13–15. 'Hēdonē' (pleasure, charm) is the typical aim and effect of this second kind of literature. In terms of the 'three styles' (Introd. v), it consorts with the 'smooth' style as pathos and sublimity do with the lofty style.

(iv) *Diction*
General remarks

30.1 Thought and expression are of course very much involved with each other. We have therefore next to consider whether any topics still remain in the field of diction. The choice of correct and magnificent words is a source of immense power to entice and charm the hearer. This is something which all orators and other writers cultivate intensely. It makes grandeur, beauty, old-world charm, weight, force, strength, and a kind of lustre bloom upon our words as upon beautiful statues; it gives things life and makes them speak. But I suspect there is no need for me to make this point; you know
2 it well. It is indeed true that beautiful words are the light that illuminates thought.

Magniloquence, however, is not always serviceable: to dress up trivial material in grand and solemn language is like putting a huge tragic mask on a little child. In poetry and history, however. . . .[1]

[Lacuna equivalent to about three pages]

Use of everyday words

31.1 . . . and productive, as is Anacreon's 'I no longer turn my mind to the Thracian filly'.[2] Similarly, Theopompus' much admired phrase seems to me to be particularly expressive because of the aptness of the analogy, though Caecilius manages to find fault with it: 'Philip was excellent at stomaching facts.' An idiomatic phrase is sometimes much more vivid than an ornament of speech, for it is immediately recognized from everyday experience, and the familiar is inevitably easier to credit. 'To stomach facts' is thus used vividly of a man who endures unpleasantness and squalor patiently, and indeed
2 with pleasure, for the sake of gain. There are similar things in

[1] History, in the view of ancient critics, had much of the dignity and freedom of poetry in matters of style and vocabulary.

[2] Fragment 96, Bergk *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*. 'Filly' is a probable, but not certain, supplement. 'Longinus'' text here is uncertain. Perhaps: '. . . But not Anacreen's "I turn my mind . . . '.

Herodotus: 'Cleomenes in his madness cut his own flesh into little pieces with a knife till he had sliced himself to death', 'Pythes continued fighting on the ship until he was cut into joints.'[1] These phrases come within an inch of being vulgar, but they are so expressive that they avoid vulgarity.

Metaphors

As regards number of metaphors, Caecilius seems to agree 32.1
with the propounders of the rule that not more than two or at most three may be used of the same subject. Here too Demosthenes is our canon. The right occasions are when emotions come flooding in and bring the multiplication of metaphors with them as a necessary accompaniment. 'Vile 2
flatterers, mutilators of their countries, who have given away liberty as a drinking present, first to Philip and now to Alexander, measuring happiness by the belly and the basest impulses overthrowing liberty and freedom from despotism, which Greeks of old regarded as the canons and standards of the good.'[2] In this passage the orator's anger against traitors obscures the multiplicity of his metaphors.

This is why Aristotle and Theophrastus say that there are 3
ways of softening bold metaphors—namely by saying 'as if', 'as it were', 'if I may put it so,' or 'if we may venture on a bold expression.' Apology, they say, is a remedy for audacity. I accept this doctrine, but I would add—and I said the same 4
about figures—that strong and appropriate emotions and genuine sublimity are a specific palliative for multiplied or daring metaphors, because their nature is to sweep and drive all these other things along with the surging tide of their movement. Indeed it might be truer to say that they *demand* the hazardous. They never allow the hearer leisure to count the metaphors, because he too shares the speaker's enthusiasm.

At the same time, nothing gives distinction to common- 5
places and descriptions so well as a continuous series of tropes. This is the medium in which the description of man's bodily

[1] vi. 75, vii. 181.
[2] Demosthenes, *Oration* xviii. 296.

tabernacle is worked out so elaborately in Xenophon and yet more superlatively by Plato.[1] Thus Plato calls the head the 'citadel' of the body; the neck is an 'isthmus' constructed between the head and the chest; the vertebrae, he says, are fixed underneath 'like pivots'. Pleasure is a 'lure of evil' for mankind: the tongue is a 'taste-meter'. The heart is a 'knot of veins' and 'fountain of the blood that moves impetuously round', allocated to the 'guard-room.' The word he uses for the various passages of the canals is 'alleys'. 'Against the throbbing of the heart', he continues, 'in the expectation of danger and in the excitation of anger, when it gets hot, they contrived a means of succour, implanting in us the lungs, soft, bloodless and with cavities, a sort of cushion, so that when anger boils up in the heart, the latter's throbbing is against a yielding obstacle, so that it comes to no harm.' Again: he calls the seat of the desires 'the women's quarters', and the seat of anger 'the men's quarters'. The spleen is for him 'a napkin for the inner parts, which therefore grows big and festering through being filled with secretions'. 'And thereafter', he says again, 'they buried the whole under a canopy of flesh', putting the flesh on 'as a protection against dangers from without, like felting'. Blood he called 'fodder of the flesh'. For the purpose of nutrition, he says also, 'they irrigated the body, cutting channels as in gardens, so that the streams of the veins might flow as it were from an incoming stream, making the body an aqueduct'. Finally: when the end is at hand, the soul's 'ship's cables' are 'loosed', and she herself 'set free'.

6 The passage contains countless similar examples; but these are enough to make my point, namely that tropes are naturally grand, that metaphors conduce to sublimity, and that passages involving emotion and description are the most suit-
7 able field for them. At the same time, it is plain without my saying it that the use of tropes, like all other good things in literature, always tempts one to go too far. This is what people ridicule most in Plato, who is often carried away by a sort of

[1] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I. iv. 5 ff.; Plato *Timaeus* 65C–85E ('Longinus' picks various details out of this long passage, and runs them together). See F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 266 ff.

literary madness into crude, harsh metaphors or allegorical fustian. 'It is not easy to understand that a city ought to be mixed like a bowl of wine, wherein the wine seethes with madness, but when chastened by another, sober god, and achieving a proper communion with him, produces a good and moderate drink.'[1] To call water 'a sober god', says the critic, and mixture 'chastening', is the language of a poet who is far from sober himself.

Digression: genius versus *mediocrity*

Faults of this kind formed the subject of Caecilius' attack 8
in his book on Lysias, in which he had the audacity to declare Lysias in all respects superior to Plato. He has in fact given way without discrimination to two emotions: loving Lysias more deeply than he loves himself, he yet hates Plato with an even greater intensity. His motive, however, is desire to score a point, and his assumptions are not, as he believed, generally accepted. In preferring Lysias to Plato he thinks he is preferring a faultless and pure writer to one who makes many mistakes. But the facts are far from supporting his view.

Let us consider a really pure and correct writer. We have **33.1**
then to ask ourselves in general terms whether grandeur attended by some faults of execution is to be preferred, in prose or poetry, to a modest success of impeccable soundness. We must also ask whether the greater *number* of good qualities or the greater good qualities ought properly to win the literary prizes. These questions are relevant to a discussion of sublimity, and urgently require an answer.

I am certain in the first place that great geniuses are least 2
'pure'. Exactness in every detail involves a risk of meanness; with grandeur, as with great wealth, there ought to be something overlooked. It may also be inevitable that low or mediocre abilities should maintain themselves generally at a correct and safe level, simply because they take no risks and do not aim at the heights, whereas greatness, just because it is greatness, incurs danger.

[1] *Laws* 773C–D.

3 I am aware also of a second point. All human affairs are, in the nature of things, better known on their worse side; the memory of mistakes is ineffaceable, that of goodness is soon
4 gone. I have myself cited not a few mistakes in Homer and other great writers, not because I take pleasure in their slips, but because I consider them not so much voluntary mistakes as oversights let fall at random through inattention and with the negligence of genius. I do, however, think that the greater good qualities, even if not consistently maintained, are always more likely to win the prize—if for no other reason, because of the greatness of spirit they reveal. Apollonius makes no mistakes in the *Argonautica*; Theocritus is very felicitous in the *Pastorals*, apart from a few passages not connected with the theme; but would you rather be Homer or Apollonius? Is
5 the Eratosthenes of that flawless little poem *Erigone* a greater poet than Archilochus, with his abundant, uncontrolled flood, that bursting forth of the divine spirit which is so hard to bring under the rule of law? Take lyric poetry: would you rather be Bacchylides or Pindar? Take tragedy: would you rather be Ion of Chios or Sophocles? Ion and Bacchylides are impeccable, uniformly beautiful writers in the polished manner; but it is Pindar and Sophocles who sometimes set the world on fire with their vehemence, for all that their flame often goes out without reason and they collapse dismally. Indeed, no one in his senses would reckon all Ion's works put together as the equivalent of the one play *Oedipus*.

34.1 If good points were totted up, not judged by their real value, Hyperides would in every way surpass Demosthenes. He is more versatile,[1] and has more good qualities. He is second-best at everything, like a pentathlon competitor; always beaten by the others for first place, he remains the best of
2 the non-specialists. In fact, he reproduces all the good features of Demosthenes, except his word-arrangement,[2] and also has for good measure the excellences and graces of Lysias. He knows how to talk simply where appropriate; he does not deliver himself of everything in the same tone, like Demosthenes. His expression of character has sweetness and

[1] Or perhaps 'fluent'. [2] See p. 8, n. 2.

delicacy. Urbanity, sophisticated sarcasm, good breeding, skill in handling irony, humour neither rude nor tasteless but flavoured with true Attic salt, an ingenuity in attack with a strong comic element and a sharp sting to its apt fun—all this produces inimitable charm. He has moreover great talents for exciting pity, and a remarkable facility for narrating myths with copiousness and developing general topics with fluency. For example, while his account of Leto is in his more poetic manner, his Funeral Speech is an unrivalled example of the epidictic style.[1] Demosthenes, by contrast, has no sense of 3
character. He lacks fluency, smoothness, and capacity for the epidictic manner; in fact he is practically without all the qualities I have been describing. When he forces himself to be funny or witty, he makes people laugh at him rather than with him. When he wants to come near to being charming, he is furthest removed from it. If he had tried to write the little speech on Phryne or that on Athenogenes,[2] he would have been an even better advertisement for Hyperides. Yet Hyperides' beauties, though numerous, are without grandeur: 4
'inert in the heart of a sober man', they leave the hearer at peace. Nobody feels frightened reading Hyperides.

But when Demosthenes begins to speak, he concentrates in himself excellences finished to the highest perfection of his sublime genius—the intensity of lofty speech, living emotions, abundance, acuteness, speed where speed is vital, all his unapproachable vehemence and power. He concentrates it all in himself—they are divine gifts, it is almost blasphemous to call them human—and so outpoints all his rivals, compensating with the beauties he has even for those which he lacks. The crash of his thunder, the brilliance of his lightning make all other orators, of all ages, insignificant. It would be easier to open your eyes to an approaching thunderbolt than to face up to his unremitting emotional blows.

To return to Plato and Lysias, there is, as I said, a further 35.1

[1] The speech in which the myth of Leto was told is lost: the Funeral Speech is extant (*Oration* ii). 'Epidictic': i.e. written as a demonstration of skill; the term applies to panegyrics, etc. Cf. chap. 8.

[2] The first is lost; the second is *Oration* 3 (5).

difference between them. Lysias is much inferior not only in the importance of the good qualities concerned but in their number; and at the same time he exceeds Plato in the number of his failings even more than he falls short in his good qualities.

2 What then was the vision which inspired those divine writers who disdained exactness of detail and aimed at the greatest prizes in literature? They saw many things. One was the fact that nature made man to be no humble or lowly creature, but brought him into life and into the universe as into a great festival, to be both a spectator and an enthusiastic contestant in its competitions. She implanted in our minds from the start an irresistible desire for anything which is great and, in relation to ourselves, supernatural.

3 The universe therefore is not wide enough for the range of human speculation and intellect. Our thoughts often travel beyond the boundaries of our surroundings. If anyone wants to know what we were born for, let him look round at life and contemplate the splendour, grandeur, and beauty in

4 which it everywhere abounds. It is a natural inclination that leads us to admire not the little streams, however pellucid and however useful, but the Nile, the Danube, the Rhine, and above all the Ocean. Nor do we feel so much awe before the little flame we kindle, because it keeps its light clear and pure, as before the fires of heaven, though they are often obscured. We do not think our flame more worthy of admiration than the craters of Etna, whose eruptions bring up rocks and whole hills out of the depths, and sometimes pour forth rivers of the

5 earth-born, spontaneous fire. A single comment fits all these examples: the useful and necessary are readily available to man, it is the unusual which always excites our wonder.

36.1 So when we come to great geniuses in literature—where, by contrast, grandeur is not divorced from service and utility—we have to conclude that such men, for all their faults, tower far above mortal stature. Other literary qualities prove their users to be human; sublimity raises us towards the spiritual greatness of god. Freedom from error does indeed save us from blame, but it is only greatness that wins admir-

ation. Need I add that every one of those great men redeems 2
all his mistakes many times over by a single sublime stroke? Finally, if you picked out all the mistakes in Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and all the other really great men, and put them together, the total would be found to be a minute fraction of the successes which those heroic figures have to their credit. Posterity and human experience—judges whose sanity envy cannot question—place the crown of victory on their heads. They keep their prize irrevocably, and will do so

So long as waters flow and tall trees flourish.[1]

It has been remarked that 'the failed Colossus is no better 3
than the Doryphorus of Polyclitus.'[2] There are many ways of answering this. We may say that accuracy is admired in art and grandeur in nature, and it is *by nature* that man is endowed with the power of speech; or again that statues are expected to represent the human form, whereas, as I said, something higher than human is sought in literature.

At this point I have a suggestion to make which takes us 4
back to the beginning of the book. Impeccability is generally a product of art; erratic excellence comes from natural greatness; therefore, art must always come to the aid of nature, and the combination of the two may well be perfection.

It seemed necessary to settle this point for the sake of our inquiry; but everyone is at liberty to enjoy what he takes pleasure in.

Similes

We must now return to the main argument. Next to meta- 37
phors come comparisons and similes. The only difference is. . . .

[Lacuna equivalent to about three pages]

[1] 'Epigram on the tomb of Midas', ascribed to Homer: see Plato, *Phaedrus* 264D.

[2] It is not certain whether 'Longinus' means the Colossus of Rhodes or some other large statue.—For the Doryphorus, famous for its proportions, see, e.g., G. M. A. Richter, *Handbook of Greek Art*, Phaidon, 1959, 110.

Hyperbole

38.1 . . . such expressions as: 'Unless you've got your brains in your heels and are walking on them.'[1] The important thing to know is how far to push a given hyperbole; it sometimes destroys it to go too far; too much tension results in relaxation, and may indeed end in the contrary of the intended
2 effect. Thus Isocrates' zeal for amplifying everything made him do a childish thing. The argument of his *Panegyricus* is that Athens surpasses Sparta in services to the Greek race. Right at the beginning we find the following:[2] 'Secondly, the power of speech is such that it can make great things lowly, give grandeur to the trivial, say what is old in a new fashion, and lend an appearance of antiquity to recent events.' Is Isocrates then about to reverse the positions of Athens and Sparta? The encomium on the power of speech is equivalent to an introduction recommending the reader not to believe
3 what he is told. I suspect that what we said of the best figures is true of the best hyperboles: they are those which avoid being seen for what they are. The desired effect is achieved when they are connected with some impressive circumstance and in moments of high emotion. Thucydides' account of those killed in Sicily is an example: 'The Syracusans came down and massacred them, especially those in the river. The water was stained; but despite the blood and the dirt, men continued to drink it, and many still fought for it.'[3] It is the intense emotion of the moment which makes it credible that dirt and blood should still be fought for as drink.
4 Herodotus has something similar about Thermopylae: 'Meanwhile though they defended themselves with swords (those who still had them), and with hands and mouths, the barbarians buried them with their missiles.'[4] What is meant by fighting armed men with mouths or being buried with missiles? Still, it is credible; for we form the impression that

[1] Demosthenes 7. 45—a speech generally thought to be spurious.
[2] *Panegyricus* 6.
[3] Thucydides vii. 84.
[4] Herodotus vii. 225.

the hyperbole is a reasonable product of the situation, not that the situation has been chosen for the sake of the hyperbole. As I keep saying, acts and emotions which approach ecstasy provide a justification for, and an antidote to, any linguistic audacity. This is why comic hyperboles, for all their incredibility, are convincing because we laugh at them so much: 'He had a farm, but it didn't stretch as far as a Laconic letter.' Laughter is emotion in pleasure. 5

There are hyperboles which belittle as well those which exaggerate. Intensification is the factor common to the two species, vilification being in a sense an amplification of lowness. 6

(v) *Word-arrangement or composition*

There remains the fifth of the factors contributing to sublimity which we originally enumerated. This was a certain kind of composition or word-arrangement. Having set out my conclusions on this subject fully in two books, I shall here add only so much as is essential for our present subject. **39.1**

Effect of rhythm

Harmony is a natural instrument not only of conviction and pleasure in mankind, but also to a remarkable degree of grandeur and emotion. The flute fills the audience with certain emotions and makes them in a manner of speaking beside themselves and possessed. It sets a rhythm, it makes the hearer move to the rhythm and assimilate himself to the tune, 'untouched by the Muses though he be'.[1] The notes of the lyre, though they have no meaning, also, as you know, often cast a wonderful spell of harmony with their varied sounds and blended and mingled notes. Yet all these are but spurious images and imitations of persuasion, not the genuine activities proper to human nature of which I spoke[2]. Composition, on the other hand, is a harmony of words, man's 2 3

[1] Euripides, fr. 663 Nauck, op. cit.

[2] Presumably in the work referred to in 39.1.

natural instrument, penetrating not only the ears but the very soul. It arouses all kinds of conceptions of words and thoughts and objects, beauty and melody—all things native and natural to mankind. The combination and variety of its sounds convey the speaker's emotions to the minds of those around him and make the hearers share them. It fits his great thoughts into a coherent structure by the way in which it builds up patterns of words. Shall we not then believe that by all these methods it bewitches us and elevates to grandeur, dignity, and sublimity both every thought which comes within its compass and ourselves as well, holding as it does complete domination over our minds? It is absurd to question facts so generally agreed. Experience is proof enough.

4 The idea which Demosthenes uses in speaking of the decree[1] is reputed very sublime, and is indeed splendid. 'This decree made the danger which then surrounded the city pass away like a cloud (touto to psēphisma ton tote tē polei peristanta kindunon parelthein epoiēsen hōsper nephos).' But the effect depends as much on the harmony as on the thought. The whole passage is based on dactylic rhythms, and these are very noble and grand. (This is why they form the heroic, the noblest metre we know.) . . .

[A short phrase missing]

. . . but make any change you like in the order:

> touto to psēphisma hōsper nephos epoiēse ton tote kindūnon parelthein,

or cut off a syllable:

> epoiēse parelthein hōs nephos.

You will immediately see how the harmony echoes the sublimity. The phrase 'hōspēr nephos' rests on its long first unit (– –) which measures four shorts; the removal of a syllable (hōs nephos) at once curtails and mutilates the grand effect.

Now lengthen the phrase:

[1] The decree making provision for war after Philip's occupation of Elatea (see p. 16, n 1).

parelthein epoiēsen hōsperei nephos.

It still means the same, but the effect is different, because the sheer sublimity is broken up and undone by the breaking up of the run of long syllables at the end.

Effect of period structure

I come now to a principle of particular importance for lending grandeur to our words. The beauty of the body depends on the way in which the limbs are joined together, each one when severed from the others having nothing remarkable about it, but the whole together forming a perfect unity. Similarly great thoughts which lack connexion are themselves wasted and waste the total sublime effect, whereas if they co-operate to form a unity and are linked by the bonds of harmony, they come to life and speak just by virtue of the periodic structure. It is indeed generally true that, in periods, grandeur results from the total contribution of many elements. **40.1**

I have shown elsewhere[1] that many poets and other writers who are not naturally sublime, and may indeed be quite unqualified for grandeur, and who use in general common and everyday words which carry with them no special effect, nevertheless acquire magnificence and splendour, and avoid being thought low or mean, solely by the way in which they arrange and fit together their words. Philistus, Aristophanes sometimes, Euripides generally, are among the many examples. Thus Heracles says after the killing of the children: 2 3

I'm full of troubles, there's no room for more.[2]

This is a very ordinary remark, but it has become sublime, as the situation demands.[3] If you re-arrange it, it will become apparent that it is in the composition, not in the sense, that Euripides' greatness appears.

Dirce is being pulled about by the bull: 4

[1] Presumably in the two books on 'composition'.
[2] Euripides, *Hercules Furens* 1245.
[3] Or, 'in accordance with its structure'.

And where it could, it writhed and twisted round,
Dragging at everything, rock, woman, oak,
Juggling with them all.[1]

The conception is fine in itself, but it has been improved by the fact that the word-harmony is not hurried and does not run smoothly; the words are propped up by one another and rest on the intervals between them; set wide apart like that, they give the impression of solid strength.

Features destructive of sublimity:
(1) Bad and affected rhythm

41.1 Nothing is so damaging to a sublime effect as effeminate and agitated rhythm, pyrrhics (∪ ∪), trochees (— ∪ or ∪ ∪ ∪) and dichorei (— ∪ — ∪); they turn into a regular jig. All the rhythmical elements immediately appear artificial and cheap, being constantly repeated in a monotonous fashion without the 2 slightest emotional effect. Worst of all, just as songs distract an audience from the action[2] and compel attention for themselves, so the rhythmical parts of speech produce on the hearer the effect not of speech but of rhythm, so that they foresee the coming endings and sometimes themselves beat time for the speaker and anticipate him in giving the step, just as in a dance.

(2) The 'chopped up' style

3 Phrases too closely knit[3] are also devoid of grandeur, as are those which are chopped up into short elements consisting of short syllables, bolted together, as it were, and rough at the joins.

[1] From Euripides' lost *Antiope* (fragment 221 Nauck, op. cit.). The Greek contains the words *perix helixas* and *petran drun*, and these are the effects to which 'Longinus' ' comment refers.

[2] Of a play, presumably.

[3] Obscure: is this the same as the 'chopped up' manner or a separate fault?

(3) *Excessive brevity*

Excessively cramped expression also does damage to sublimity. It cripples grandeur to compress it into too short a space. I do not mean proper compression, but cutting up into tiny pieces. Cramping mutilates sense; brevity gives directness. Conversely with fully extended expressions: anything developed at unseasonable length falls dead.[1] 42

(4) *Undignified vocabulary*

Lowness of diction also destroys grandeur. 43.1

The description of the storm in Herodotus is magnificent in conception, but includes expressions which are below the dignity of the subject.[2] 'The sea seethed' is one instance: the cacophony does much to dissipate the sublime effect. 'The wind slacked' is another example; yet another is the 'unpleasant end' which awaited those who were thrown against the wreckage. 'Slack' is an undignified, colloquial word; 'unpleasant' is inappropriate to such an experience.

Similarly, Theopompus first gives a magnificent setting to the descent of the Persian king on Egypt, and then ruins it all with a few words:[3] 2

'What city or nation in Asia did not send its embassy to the King? What thing of beauty or value, product of the earth or work of art, was not brought him as a gift? There were many precious coverlets and cloaks, purple, embroidered, and white; there were many gold tents fitted out with all necessities; there were many robes and beds of great price. There were silver vessels and worked gold, drinking cups and bowls, some studded with jewels, some elaborately and preciously wrought. Countless myriads of arms were there, Greek and

[1] Again an obscure section, partly because 'Longinus' seems to intend it as an example of 'brevity'.

[2] Herodotus 7. 188, 191; 8. 13.

[3] The passage is also quoted by Athenaeus (2, 67F). 'Longinus' probably got it (like many of his quotations) from a collection of excerpts rather than from the original.

barbarian. There were multitudes of pack animals and victims fattened for slaughter, many bushels of condiments, many bags and sacks and pots of onions and every other necessity. There was so much salt meat of every kind that travellers approaching from a distance mistook the huge heaps for cliffs or hills thrusting up from the plain.'

3 He passes from the sublime to the mean; the development of the scene should have been the other way round. By mixing up the bags and the condiments and the sacks in the splendid account of the whole expedition, he conjures up the vision of a kitchen. Suppose one actually had these beautiful objects before one's eyes, and then dumped some bags and sacks in the middle of the gold and jewelled bowls, the silver vessels, the gold tents, and the drinking-cups—the effect would be disgusting. It is the same with style: if you insert words like this when they are not wanted, they make a blot on the con-

4 text. It was open to Theopompus to give a general description of the 'hills' which he says were raised, and, having made this change,[1] to proceed to the rest of the preparations, mentioning camels and multitudes of beasts of burden carrying everything needed for luxury and pleasure of the table, or speaking of 'heaps of all kinds of seeds and everything that makes for fine cuisine and dainty living.' If he had wanted at all costs to make the king self-supporting,[2] he could have talked of 'all the refinements of maîtres-d'hôtel and chefs'.

5 It is wrong to descend, in a sublime passage, to the filthy and contemptible, unless we are absolutely compelled to do so. We ought to use words worthy of things. We ought to imitate nature, who, in creating man, did not set our private parts or the excretions of our body in the face, but concealed them as well as she could, and, as Xenophon says,[3] made the channels of these organs as remote as possible, so as not to spoil the beauty of the creature as a whole.

[1] Translation doubtful. Perhaps 'and then make a change of arrangement and proceed. . . .'.

[2] Text suspect.

[3] *Memorabilia* I. iv. 6.

Conclusion of chaps. 39–43

There is no urgent need to enumerate in detail features 6
which produce a low effect. We have explained what makes style noble and sublime; the opposite qualities will obviously make it low and undignified.

Appendix: causes of the decline of literature

I shall not hesitate to add for your instruction, my dear **44.1**
Terentianus, one further topic, so as to clear up a question put to me the other day by one of the philosophers.

'I wonder', he said, 'and so no doubt do many others, why it is that in our age there are minds which are strikingly persuasive and practical, shrewd, versatile, and well endowed with the ability to write agreeably, but no sublime or really great minds, except perhaps here and there. There is a universal dearth of literature.

'Are we to believe', he went on, 'the common explanation 2
that democracy nurtures greatness, and great writers flourished with democracy and died with it? Freedom, the argument goes, nourishes and encourages the thoughts of the great, as well as exciting their enthusiasm for rivalry with one another and their ambition for the prize. In addition the 3
availability of political reward sharpens and polishes up orators' talents by giving them exercise; they shine forth, free in a free world. We of the present day, on the other hand', he continued, 'seem to have learned in infancy to live under justified slavery, swathed round from our first tender thoughts in the same habits and customs, never allowed to taste that fair and fecund spring of literature, freedom. We end up as flatterers in the grand manner.'

He went on to say how the same argument explained why, 4
unlike other capacities, that of the orator could never belong to a slave.

'The inability to speak freely and the consciousness of being a prisoner at once assert themselves, battered into him as they have been by the blows of habit. As Homer says,[1] 5

[1] *Odyssey* xvii. 322–3.

"The day of slavery takes half one's manhood away." I don't know if it's true, but I understand that the cages in which dwarfs or Pygmies are kept not only prevent the growth of the prisoners but cripple them because of the fastening which constricts the body. One might describe all slavery, even the most justified,[1] as a cage for the soul, a universal prison.'

6 'My good friend', I replied, 'it is easy to find fault with the present situation; indeed it is a human characteristic to do so. But I wonder whether what destroys great minds is not the peace of the world, but the unlimited war which lays hold on our desires, and all the passions which beset and ravage our modern life. Avarice, the insatiable disease from which we all suffer, and love of pleasure are our two slavemasters; or perhaps one should say that they sink our ship of life with all hands. Avarice is a mean disease; love of pleasure is base through and
7 through. I cannot see how we can honour, or rather deify, unlimited wealth as we do without admitting into our souls the evils which attach to it. When wealth is measureless and uncontrolled, extravagance comes with it, sticking close beside it, and, as they say, keeping step. The moment wealth opens the way into cities and houses, extravagance also enters and dwells therein. These evils then become chronic in people's lives, and, as the philosophers say,[2] nest and breed. They are soon busy producing offspring: greed, pride, and luxury are their all too legitimate children. If these offspring of wealth are allowed to mature, they breed in turn those inexorable tyrants of the soul, insolence, lawlessness, and shame-
8 lessness. It is an inevitable process. Men will no longer open their eyes or give thought to their reputation with posterity. The ruin of their lives is gradually consummated in a cycle of such vices. Greatness of mind wanes, fades, and loses its attraction when men spend their admiration on their mortal parts and neglect to develop the immortal. One
9 who has been bribed to give a judgement will no longer be a free and sound judge of rightness and nobility. The corrupt

[1] I translate as though the adjective *dikaios* meant the same as it does just above; but perhaps 'justly exercised', i.e. humane.

[2] Cf. Plato, *Republic* ix. 573E.

man inevitably thinks his own side's claim just and fair. Yet nowadays bribery is the arbiter of the life and fortunes of every one of us—not to mention chasing after other people's deaths and conspiring about wills. We are all so enslaved by avarice that we buy the power of making profit out of everything at the price of our souls. Amid such pestilential corruption of human life, how can we expect any free, uncorrupt judge of great things of permanent value to be left to us? How can we hope not to lose our case to the corrupt practices of the love of gain?

'Perhaps people like us are better as subjects than given 10
our freedom. Greed would flood the world in woe, if it were really released and let out of the cage, to prey on its neighbours.'

Idleness, I went on to say, was the bane of present-day 11
minds. We all live with it. Our whole régime of effort and relaxation[1] is devoted to praise and pleasure, not to the useful results that deserve emulation and honour.

'Best to let these things be',[2] and proceed to our next 12
subject. This was emotion, to which we promised to devote a separate treatise. It occupies as I said, a very important place among the constituents of literature in general, and sublimity in particular. . . .

[A few words missing at the end]

[1] Or 'all our effort and all that we undertake'.
[2] Euripides, *Electra* 379.

Authors mentioned or quoted

AESCHYLUS (525–456 B.C.): first of the three great Attic tragedians, especially admired for his grandeur: 15. 5, 15.6.

AMMONIUS: Alexandrian grammarian (second century B.C.), pupil and successor of Aristarchus: 13. 3.

AMPHICRATES: historian, first-century B.C.; style criticized by 'classicists' of Augustan and later times: 3. 2, 4. 4.

ANACREON: b. *c.* 570 B.C.: lyric poet: 31. 1.

APOLLONIUS (of Rhodes): Alexandrian poet, third century B.C.; *Argonautica* extant: 33. 4.

ARATUS: third century B.C.; Alexandrian didactic poet; *Phaenomena* (on astronomy) extant: 10. 6, 26. 1.

ARCHILOCHUS: seventh century B.C.; lyric and elegiac poet: 10. 7, 13. 3, 33, 5.

BACCHYLIDES: fifth century B.C.; lyric poet, nephew of Simonides; victory-odes and dithyrambs extant on papyrus (discovered 1896): 33. 5.

CAECILIUS OF CALACTE: first century B.C., critic and historian; wrote *On Sublimity*, on which 'Longinus' book is ostensibly a critique: 1. 1, 4. 2, 8. 1, 31. 1, 32. 2, 32. 8.

CICERO: (106–43 B.C.): the greatest Roman orator: compared with Demosthenes, 12. 4.

CLITARCHUS: historian of Alexander, third century B.C.; unreliable and journalistic, according to ancient critics; not extant: 3. 2.

DEMOSTHENES (384–322 B.C.): the greatest Attic orator; much admired and often quoted (ten times in Longinus) as a model: see especially 12. 4–5 (comparison with Cicero), 34. 3–4 (comparison with Hyperides).

ERATOSTHENES (*c.* 275–194 B.C.): mathematician, geographer, poet and critic; mentioned 33. 5, for his mythological poem on the Athenian legend of Erigone.

EUPOLIS (fifth century B.C.): comic poet: 16. 3.

EURIPIDES (?484–406 B.C.): the third great tragedian; admired for treatment of passions, not capable of Aeschylean grandeur: quoted ten times; see especially 15. 3–9.

GORGIAS (*c.* 480–376 B.C.): Sicilian sophist and rhetor, one of the most influential of early prose writers; style full of mannerism and antithesis; two short works extant: 3. 2.

HECATAEUS OF MILETUS (*c.* 500 B.C.): early historian and geographer: 27. 2.

HEGESIAS OF MAGNESIA: third century B.C.; historian and orator, whose eccentric and snappy style was much disliked by later classicizing writers: 3. 2.

HERODOTUS (died after 430 B.C.): the first great historian, both admired and criticized as a stylist: note 13. 2 ('most Homeric'), 43. 1.

HESIOD: early poet (eighth or seventh century?); *Works and Days* and *Theogony* extant; *Shield of Heracles* usually thought to be spurious (cf. 9. 5).

HOMER: quoted over twenty times; see especially 9. 11–15, comparison of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

HYPERIDES (389–322 B.C.): Attic orator, some speeches (including *Athenogenes* and *Funeral Speech*) extant on papyrus. See especially 34, comparison with Demosthenes.

ION OF CHIOS (born *c.* 490 B.C.): poet and memoir-writer; no complete works extant: 33. 5.

ISOCRATES (436–338 B.C.): Athenian orator and educator, author of many extant speeches, including Panegyricus (*c.* 380 B.C.): 4. 2, 21. 1 (his 'school'), 38. 2.

LYSIAS (died *c.* 380 B.C.): Attic orator, over thirty speeches extant; the idol of later Atticists for his clear, elegant, plain style: 32. 35.

MATRIS OF THEBES: Hellenistic author (third or second century B.C.); wrote hymns and encomia; mannered style, much disliked by later classicizers: 3. 2.

PINDAR (518–438 B.C.): the greatest Greek and choral lyric poet; of his various works (cf. Horace, *Odes* IV. ii), only Victory Odes (for the great athletic festivals) survive: 33. 5.

PLATO (*c.* 428–348 B.C.): criticized as a stylist by Caecilius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, warmly defended by 'Longinus': 12–13, 32. Quoted nine times.

SAPPHO (*c.* 600 B.C.): Lesbian poetess; 'Longinus' (10. 1) preserves one of the two longest passages known to us from literary sources; papyri have lately given more.

SIMONIDES (*c.* 556–468 B.C.): lyric and elegiac poet: 15. 7.

SOPHOCLES (*c.* 496–406 B.C.): the second of the three great tragedians 15. 7, 23. 3 (and perhaps the fragment in 3. 2 is his).

STESICHORUS (of Himera): sixth-century lyric poet: used epic themes and dactylic metres in lyric: hence 'most Homeric', 13. 3.

THEOCRITUS: Alexandrian poet of pastoral and other pieces, third century B.C.: collection of poems extant: 33. 4.

THEODORUS (of Gadara): teacher of rhetoric, Augustan period: 3. 5.

THEOPOMPUS (of Chios): fourth-century B.C. historian, with rhetorical and moralizing tendencies: long passage quoted and discussed, 43.

TIMAEUS (of Tauromenium): historian of Sicily, early third century B.C.; much criticized by ancient critics, as by 'Longinus', 4.

XENOPHON (*c.* 425–354 B.C.): historian and writer on Socrates; much admired by 'Longinus', who wrote a book about him: 4. 4, 8. 1, 19. 1, etc.

ZOILUS (fourth century B.C.): sophist and critic of Homer: 9. 14.